Inter-America

A MONTHLY THAT LINKS THE THOUGHT OF THE NEW WORLD

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INTER-AMERICA

THE purpose of INTER-AMERICA is to contribute to the establishment of a community of ideas between all the peoples of America by aiding to overcome the barrier of language, which hitherto has kept them apart. It is issued alternately, one month in Spanish, made up of diversified articles translated from the periodical literature of the United States, and the next month in English, composed of similar articles translated from the periodical literature of the American countries of Spanish or Portuguese speech.

INTER-AMERICA thus serves as a vehicle for the international dissemination of articles already circulated in the several countries. It therefore does not publish original articles or make editorial comment. It merely translates what has been previously published, without approving or censuring, in order that the reading public of all the American countries may have access to ideas current in each of them.

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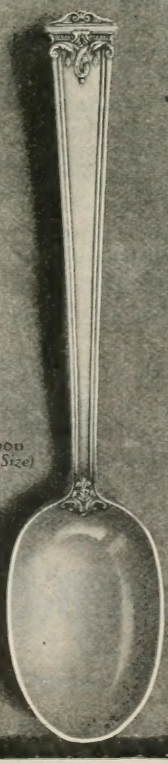

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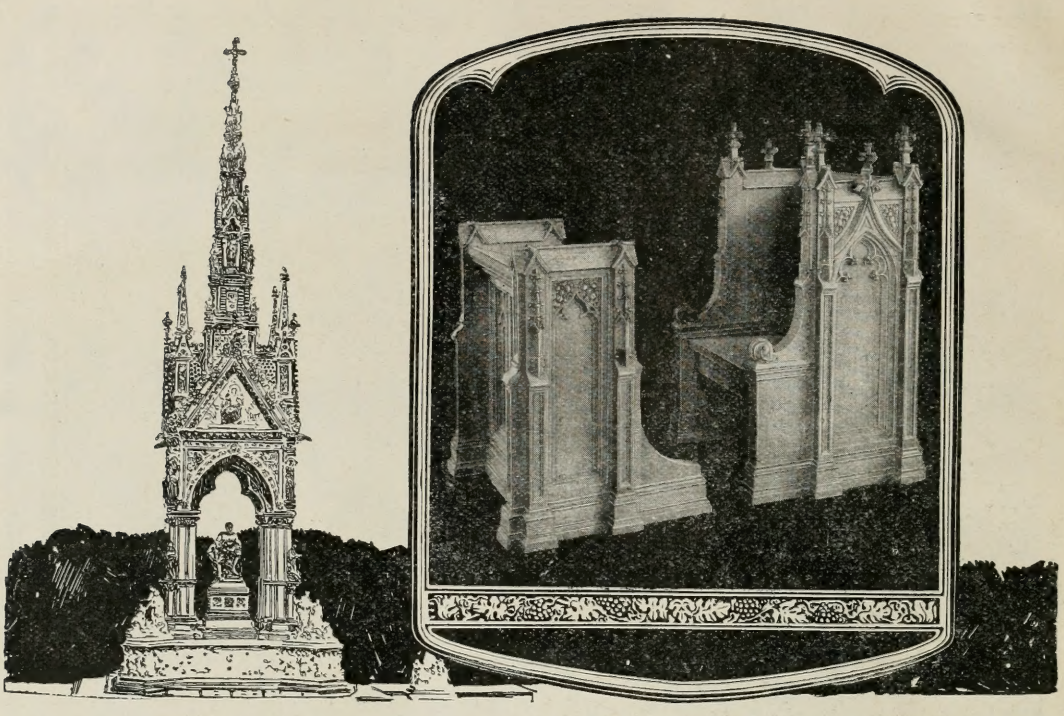

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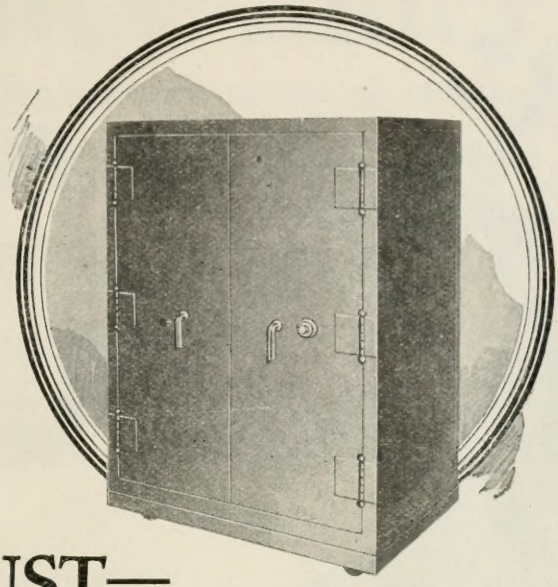

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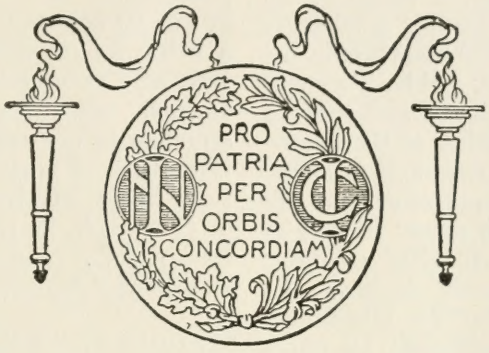

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BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

REGARDING THE AUTHORS OF THE ARTICLES THAT APPEAR IN THIS NUMBER

RICARDO ROJAS was born on September 16, 1882, in Tucumán; he was educated in Santiago del Estero; he began the study of law, but abandoned it to devote himself to journalism and literature, in which he has had a distinguished career; for some years he has been a professor of literature in the Universidad de La Plata, and he is a member of a number of scientific and literary societies. He is the author of the following works: in verse: *La victoria del hombre; Los lises del blasón; La sangre del sol; Los cantos de Perséphone;* in prose: *El país de la selva; Cosmópolis; El alma española; Cartas de Europa; Blasón de plata; La restauración nacionalista; La universidad de Tucumán; La argentinidad; La ronda de la muerte; Calíope; Poesías de Cervantes;* and *La literatura argentina* (four volumes). He has also directed the publication of the following works: *Archivo capitular de Jujuy* (3 volumes); *Bibliografía de Sarmiento; Poesías de Cervantes;* and *Biblioteca argentina* (18 volumes).

ALFREDO J. COLMO was born in Buenos Aires in 1878; he was educated there, being graduated from the Universidad de Buenos Aires with the degree of doctor of laws *summa cum laude*; after a competitive examination, he was invited to occupy the chair of sociology in the faculty of philosophy and letters, and that of civil law in the faculty of law of the Universidad de Buenos Aires; he is also the editor of the *Anales* of the university; in 1920 he represented his government in the international labor conference held at Genoa; in addition to his numerous articles contributed to the press, he is the author of: *América latina; Sarmiento y los Estados Unidos; La cultura jurídica y la facultad de derecho; Bases de organización universitaria en los países americanos; Técnica legislativa del código civil argentino;* and of *Los éxitos y el éxito* and *El código civil en su cincuentario* (pamphlets).

JOSÉ ANTONIO CAMPOS is about fifty-fours years old; he was born in Guayaquil and was educated in the public schools and in the Colegio San Vicente; he took up the profession of journalism and has been editor-in-chief of *La Nación, Grito del Pueblo, El Telégrafo, El Independente, El Nacional, El Globo, El Patriota,* and he is at present editor-in-chief of *El Guante* and a writer for the leading papers of Quito, such as *El Comercio, La Prensa* and *La Nación.* He was minister of public instruction in 1896-1897; director of public instruction of Guayas (province); he has served as a member of the *ayuntamiento* of Guayaquil; he is also secretary of the Banco del Ecuador and of the Banco Comercial y Agrícola.

RAMIRO GUERRA Y SÁNCHEZ was born in Batabanó, in the province of Habana, Cuba, January 31, 1880, and he was educated in his native town and in Habana. His studies were interrupted by the war of independence, 1895–1898. He is a teacher and a man of letters, and he has served as superintendent of schools of the province of Pinar del Río, and as director of the normal school in Habana. He has devoted much time to *Cuba Pedagógica* of Habana, a magazine of education. He is the author of numerous text-books and works on education, ethics, et cetera.

VICENTE A. SALAVERRI: see INTER-AMERICA for August, 1921, Biographical Data, page 336.

ENRIQUE HERRERO DUCLOUX: see INTER-AMERICA for October, 1920, Biographical Data, page 2.

ANTÉNOR FIRMIN was born in Haiti in 1850; he was educated as a lawyer, and he devoted his life chiefly to literature and diplomacy; he represented his country as minister to Cuba and to Great Britain; among his writings may be mentioned: *De l'égalité des races humaines; Lettres de Saint-Thomas: études sociologiques, historiques et littéraires; M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis et la république d'Haïti;* and *Une défense: M. Stewart et les finances haïtiennes.*

BARTOLOMÉ MITRE

HIS INTELLECTUAL PERSONALITY[1]

BY

RICARDO ROJAS

On June 26 last the centenary of the birth of Bartolomé Mitre was celebrated with great enthusiasm and pomp throughout Argentina, and with less circumstance in other Hispanic-American countries, as well as in the United States and elsewhere. On that day, *La Nación* of Buenos Aires published a number extraordinary of ninety pages, almost all of which was devoted to Mitre. It consisted of articles, a poem, an oration and many illustrations. The literary features of the number were: "La vida del prócer," by Gervasio Rosas; "Oda a Mitre," a poem by Rubén Darío; "Mitre orador," an address delivered by Mitre on October 25, 1868, at Chivilcoy; "Mitre, hombre de Estado," by Joaquín V. González; "El político," by Emilio Frers; "Mitre diplomático," by José León Suárez; "La Personalidad intelectual de Mitre," by Ricardo Rojas; "Nacionalismo de Mitre," by Ramón J. Cárcano; "Mitre historiador," by Clemente L. Fregeiro; "Panegírico filosófico," by Leopoldo Lugones; "El general Mitre como comandante en jefe," by Nicolás de Vedia; "Mitre y el albaceazgo de la revolución," by Justino Jiménez de Aréchaga; "La personalidad de Mitre en el Brasil," by Assis Chateaubriand; "La campaña de Pavón," by Emilio Kinkelin; "La guerra del Paraguay," by Juan Beverina; "La grandeza de la Argentina," by C. Hagberg Wright; "D. Bartolomé Mitre, español," by Miguel de Unamuno; "La batalla de Cepeda," by Ramón J. Cárcano; "Mitre unificador," by Juan B. Terán; "Mitre americanista," by Luis María Torres; "Mitre en el parlamento," by Mariano de Vedia; "Mitre financista," by Alfredo Labougle; "La sanción de los tiempos," by B. Sanín Cano; "Elogio del repúblico," by Alberto Gerhunoff; "La historia y las naciones," by Charles Maurras; "Mitre en Buenos Aires," by Rodolfo Rivarola; "Mitre en el corazón de los italianos," by Basilio Cittadini; "Añoranzas," by J. B. Cunningham Graham; "Desde el punto de vista de Entre Ríos," by Lorenzo Anadón; "Mitre en Bolivia," by Alcides Arguedas; "Salta en la organización nacional," by Carlos Ibarguren; "El genio de Mitre," by J. Alfredo Ferreira; "La influencia de Mitre en Tucumán," by José Lucas Penna; "San Luis y la acción de Mitre," by Juan W. Gez; "El pensamiento de Córdoba," by Juan B. González; "Mitre y Mendoza," by Juan M. Peralta; "Mitre y La Rioja," by Joaquín V. González; "Mitre en San Juan," by José Chirapozu; "El españolismo de Mitre," by R. Monner Sans; "La provincia de Catamarca," by Guillermo Correa; "Mitre desde los Estados Unidos," by Peter H. Goldsmith; "Santa Fe y Mitre," by Nicanor Molinas; "Mitre en el Perú," by Carlos A. Romero; "Mitre y el afianzamiento institucional en Santiago," by Federico Álvarez; "La permanencia de Mitre en Chile," by Carlos Silva Vildósola. We have selected the following article by Ricardo Rojas for translation and reproduction in this and the next English number of INTER-AMERICA. In addition to the number extraordinary of *La Nación*, many articles in recognition of the centenary were published in the leading newspapers and magazines of the world, and particularly of the world of Spanish and Portuguese speech.—THE EDITOR.

I

THE PATERNAL HOME

THE surname "Mitre" appears for the first time in Argentine society with Juan de Mitre, whose name appears in certain colonial documents of our sixteenth century. There were not lacking those that thought to flatter Mitre the great by seeking for him relationship with the ancient homonym, without considering that this would mean nothing for one who, like Napoleon, could exclaim: "*Je suis mes ancêtres.*" A man as serious as the señor Trelles (or a kinsman of his) painted in oils an imaginary scene in which are shown, near the site of the founding of Córdoba, that Juan de Mitre, a fellow-soldier of Cabrera's, and his children, Inés and Juan (called "Mitre the younger"), dressed in the garb of the period, but represented, respectively, with the faces of the general and his children Bartolito and Delfina. Mitre preserved the painting, and it may be seen in the museum[2] in the Calle San Martín, although he never

[1] On the eve of sketching in this number extraordinary, "Bartolomé Mitre, His Intellectual Personality," it seemed to me that I could prepare nothing better on such a theme than the pages written with so much devotion in my *Historia de la literatura argentina*. To bring together the parts of this work that refer to Mitre; to rearrange them with pertinent unity; to alter them for the occasion, without modifying the substance or form of the estimates: this, I thought, would be the most independent, most thoughtful and most sincere tribute I could pay to the glorious master on his first centenary. I communicated this conviction to *La Nación*, which intelligently shared the same opinion, inasmuch as it was a question of pages elaborated in the serene environment of the university, and such as had already received the sanction of criticism both here and abroad. Such is the origin of the study of Mitre that we publish to-day.

[2] Museo Mitre, where are preserved General Mitre's great library, curios, paintings, coins and medals and many objects associated with his person or memory.—THE EDITOR.

attached to the gift other significance than that of an ingenious fancy. In spite of it, another of his biographers—José Biedma—in his book entitled *Bartolomé Mitre*, began the biography by bestowing upon the great man that same improbable lineage. Juan de Mitre was the founder of Córdoba and a citizen of Santiago del Estero; his name appears, in a quondam capitulary document or some report of the Holy Office, as a witness; but it has not been learned whence he came nor how long he perpetuated his offspring.[3]

More serious is the genealogy that causes our Mitre to be born of other Mitres—Felipe and José—who in the second half of the eighteenth century seem to have resided in the Banda Oriental.[4] It is possible that to them belonged the ancestor of the Argentine patriot—also named Bartolomé, like his illustrious grandson—a citizen of Montevideo, the chief *alguacil*[5] of the city during the decade that began with 1760, and the founder of Santa Lucía del Uruguay, where, in 1776, was born his son Ambrosio, the father of the general.[6] Already in both the immediate ancestors was disclosed the caste of men of action, as the epoch required them to be: founders of peoples in the virgin lands; armed pioneers of the European race in the wilderness; civilizers, in short, to sum it all up in a single word.

Don Ambrosio, the father, was a frontier commander in Mendoza—on the Río Diamente, with the Indians in front—and the founder of the fort of San Rafael. Taking up his residence afterward in Patagones, a fort lost in the far south, he was one of its defenders in 1827, during the Brazilian invasion. He had served previously in the war of independence; and in the barbarous environment or on heroic occasions his character became tempered, as it was to persist, intrepidly and austerely, in the hereditary virtue of his gifted son.

When Echagüe, at the head of a Rosist army, invaded Uruguay in 1839, young Bartolomé Mitre, recently initiated into the career of arms, set out to meet the invader in the glorious campaign that terminated with the victory of Cagancha. In starting to the war, when he was only nineteen years old, his father sent him this Spartan missive:

> I think of thee as on the eve of the next battle, which is going to decide the fate of the country. I hope that thou wilt do thy duty; if thou diest, thou wilt have fulfilled thy mission; but see to it that they shall not wound thee in the back. After losing thee, whatsoever may happen—and for it I am prepared—the rest of my sad life will be consoled by the honorable memory that I hope thou wilt bequeath me. Good-by, dear son, thou art my hope.[7]

In truth, the young artilleryman was able to show himself worthy of the enterprise and of the father who, with these words, sent him to death and to glory in a holocaust of liberty.

Half a century later, in the polemic between Mitre and López regarding Argentine history, the author of *Belgrano* recalled those that had substantiated by oral tradition his written thoughts, and he mentioned his collaborators, saying:

> I shall begin with the most modest and the most beloved. He was one of the first that initiated me in the intimate knowledge of the men and things of his times, my father, don Ambrosio Mitre, who, like one of many private soldiers of the revolution confused with the mass of citizens, played a part in Monteagudo's Sociedad Patriótica, on whose program his name was inscribed, and who, as a military employee of the treasury in the armies of the revolution, came into intimate relations with many of the men that occupied the historical stage down to 1820.[8]

Mitre called his father "the most modest and the best loved" of his collaborators; and, although he did not attribute to him any other historical category than that of private soldier or anonymous citizen, there may be discovered, under this intentionally modest statement, the voice of the

[3] Medina: *La inquisición en el río de la Plata.*

[4] Uruguay.—THE EDITOR.

[5] Constable, bailiff.—THE EDITOR.

[6] The capitulary minutes of Montevideo document the account of those ediles.

[7] I take this letter from the already cited book of Biedma, page 16. Although there is no indication there of its source, its author has informed me that the general himself made him acquainted with that document.

[8] Mitre: *comprobaciones históricas*, volume I, page 352.

heart and the echo of his profound influence.[9]

About 1820, don Ambrosio Mitre retired from military activity and contracted matrimony in Buenos Aires with doña Josefa Martínez, a creole, also of Spanish origin, like her husband, and a sterling woman who, living until 1876, was able to behold the successful career of her son at its height.

Bartolomé was born in Buenos Aires, June 26, 1821; he was baptized with the name of his grandfather (the old *alguacil* of Montevideo) under the sponsorship of General Rondeau,[10] who cherished for his foster-son a paternal affection until death.[11] About that time the Mitres went to live at Patagones, and at that place were born Emilio and Federico—Bartolomé's brothers—who attained high rank in the army of the republic during the times of the conquest of the wilderness and national organization.

II

THE ROMANTIC INITIATION

BEHOLD Mitre now as a child, on the banks of the Río Negro, with the pampa of the *gauchos* on the north, and the Patagonia of the Indians on the south. The southern Atlantic, without a ship, rolled away in the distance, and behind him stretched the wilderness. The virgin nature of America: such was the theater where his consciousness was to awaken. To the austere domestic influences with which we are already acquainted, were to be added those of a gloomy village, which was a border settlement, and those of the primeval environment, as in the hard centuries of the conquest. I am tempted to say that such influences contributed to temper the manly soul of the patriot, stamped to old age with the seal of fatalism and martial discipline.

He was barely seven years old when the Brazilians, at war with the republic, assaulted the solitary coast of Patagones, and hardly twice as old when his father delivered him to the tutorship of don Gervasio Rosas, that he might harden him in the work of the farm. It has been said that this assignment was a punishment to tame his wilful spirit.[12] Be that as it may, Mitre, at the age of puberty, went from the coast of Patagones to the coast of Samborombón, and in López's *estancia* of El Rincón, under the ferule of Rosas, he completed his gauchesque apprenticeship. Such was his school in art and liberty. Thence he came forth, a poet and a soldier, to go to experience, while still adolescent, the adventures of his long struggle against tyranny. A prodigious destiny: this soldier was to become a mathematician; this poet, a man of learning; this son of the pampa without instructors, the teacher of his countrymen.

In the setting of the pampa awakened Mitre's first esthetic emotions, and when later the young pampan returned to the cities, he came on the good news of romanticism, which turned the national art in the direction of the inspiring fountain of these native emotions.

The esthetic ideas diffused on the Plata by Esteban Echeverría and the publication of *La cautiva*[13] in 1837 constituted the nucleus of the new literary school. About

[9]Don Ambrosio Mitre died in Montevideo, during the siege of Oribe, in October, 1845. *El Nacional* published his necrology.—See Zinny: *La prensa periódica*, page 432.

[10]José Rondeau: born in Buenos Aires, March 4, 1773. He was taken to Montevideo in his early youth, and he began his career as cadet in the army in 1793. He fought in the Uruguayan frontier service against the Indians and the Portuguese, and he was one of the defenders of Montevideo against the English in 1807. Taken prisoner by them in the assault on the city, February 3 of that year, he was sent to England. From there he went to Spain, serving in a cavalry corps until 1810, the year of his return to the Río de la Plata. Enlisting in the cause of the revolution, he was given the rank of lieutenant-colonel, March, 1811; of colonel in 1812; and of brigadier general in 1814. He played an important part subsequently in the military and civic affairs of his country, being chosen supreme director of the nation in 1815 and 1819. He died in Montevideo, November 18, 1844.—THE EDITOR.

[11]*Comprobaciones*, volume I, page 353.—Rondeau gave young Mitre his walking-stick in Montevideo, and General Las Heras later made him a similar present in Chile, in the days of the proscription. It might be said that both leaders had discerned in this youth a successor.

[12]Regarding Mitre, Sarmiento, when he became acquainted with him in Montevideo, said: "A poet by vocation," "a *gaucho* of the pampa," as a punishment imposed upon his intellectual instincts, et cetera.—*Viajes*, in a letter to Vicente López, 1846.—According to tradition, young Mitre was sent to the *estancia* of don Gervasio for the good of his health.

[13]Echeverría's most notable poetic work.—THE EDITOR.

this nucleus was formed the generation of 1840. A school born under the influence of French romanticism, it assumed, nevertheless, the character of an aboriginal movement, because the exaltation of sentiments caused by tyranny and the painting of the native landscape gave to it such rootage that soon it was possible to speak of an American romanticism. Thence came the lateral influence that *La cautiva* exerted on the dialectic work of the *gauchescos*,[14] by amplifying its elements of composition to the point where they were carried by Ascasubi with *Santos Vega* in 1851. Aside, however, from this involuntary influence on the song of the *payadores*,[15] Echeverría accomplished in Argentine art the purpose he deliberately proposed, which was that of freeing cultivated poets from the academic canons and sending them back to the blessed domain of nature. Such is his true claim to glory.

The transcendency of *La cautiva*, an initial poem of the new school, was prolonged in the immediate disciples of Echeverría—among whom was Mitre—and it comes down to us in Obligado's *Santos Vega*.

I have mentioned Mitre because, indeed, he was one of the first to attempt to continue the work of the romantic master, in respect of its Americanism, and the first to seek to try to explain his own attempts by critical glosses, in which he set forth anew—Echeverría now being dead—the esthetics of a national poetry of the pampa and its *gauchos*. I refer here, however, to the Mitre of the *Rimas*, the romantic poet of youthful years. His personality will grow so much after these years, that, shining in history, philosophy, government, in all the forms of mental and social action, he will close his life of longevity by leaving to his people, at one and the same time, the image of a patriarchal old man and that of a very complex and harmonious mind.

I ought to mention him now only because of the link he consciously added to the native poetry of the pampa and its *gauchos*. Mitre was, in this tendency of our art, one of its precursors and founders.

All Mitre's poetical compositions were written before 1846. Gathered for the first time in a volume, they were published in 1854; although prior to that time they had appeared fragmentarily in Montevideo and the countries to which the proscription carried him in protest against the tyranny of Rosas. During the siege of that city, he hobnobbed with Echeverría, who at that time exceeded him in age and learning. Mitre was barely twenty years old, while Echeverría was going on forty; Mitre had been formed on an *estancia* of the pampa; Echeverria, in the schools of Paris. In 1846 the author of *La cautiva* drew attention to Mitre in public with these words:

> Señor Mitre, a scientific artilleryman, a soldier at Cagancha and at the siege of Montevideo, acquired, from his early youth, no little reputation as a thinker and poet. His poetry is distinguished from that of his contemporaries by the manly frankness of its movement and by a certain timbre of voice that reminds us of the vigorous intonation of Callimachus and Tyrtæus. He is at present engaged in historical studies that will doubtless win for him new laurels.

I quote these words—calling attention in passing to the accuracy of the prophecy—to establish the relation of teacher and pupil, during the decade from 1840 until 1850.

It was during this period that young Mitre wrote several poems on pampan themes, those that form the second book, in the edition of the *Rimas*. The poet gave to these compositions the thoroughly descriptive title of *Armonías de la pampa*, and they were: *El caballo del gaucho; El pato; El ombú en medio de la pampa;* and *Santos Vega*. The enumeration of these poems and consideration of the time in which they were written will be sufficient to make clear their chronological importance and to justify the place of precursor that I have assigned to their author in the genealogical series of the native poets. Mitre was, it should be said, the first Agentine poet to incorporate in our litera-

[14] The writers that emphasized and developed gauchesque themes.—THE EDITOR.

[15] Singular, *payador*, an Argentinism: the *gaucho* bard or improviser of popular songs, called *tristes* or *vidalitas* (corresponding to the *yaravíes* of Ecuador and Perú), sometimes amorous and sometimes nationalistic, and usually accompanied by the guitar.—THE EDITOR.

ture the popular tradition of Santos Vega, since his poem was written prior to 1846.[16] With Mitre began the literary elaboration of the legend of the *payador*, which Ascasubi, Gutiérrez, Obligado and other later writers were to perfect down to our days. Ascasubi began his *Santos Vega* in 1850, and he published the first part in 1851. If Echeverría influenced the technics of composition, Mitre influenced perhaps the suggestiveness of the argument. The three were—as will be remembered—proscribed by Rosas, besieged by Oribe and companions in misfortune in Montevideo. The literary fraternity of these three poets seems to me therefore quite evident.

III

THE PAMPAN LEGEND

IN MITRE'S *Armonías de la pampa* we find all the characteristics of popular poetry: simpleness of language, the simplicity of octosyllabic meter, the pampan environment, traditional argument, and payadoresque emotion. What alone Mitre did not desire to take from the *payadores*, in his poems of this kind, was the rustic vocabulary. In this consists, as I desire to show, divergence between the two native currents of our literature: the primitive current being dialectic; and the romantic, cultured. Mitre enlisted with his *Santos Vega* in the latter, that is, with the progeny of Echeverría; and he laid an esthetic foundation for his attitude with the following note, which glosses that poem:

> This composition belongs to a kind that may be termed new, not so much on account of the subject as of the style. The primitive and original customs of the pampa have had many singers among us, but almost all have confined themselves to copying them, instead of poetizing them by bringing into play their passions, modified by the life of the desert, and by making use of their traditions and even of their prejudices. So that, in order to make the *gauchos* speak, they have accepted all their barbarisms, elevating to the rank of poetry a jargon, very energetic, very descriptive and very humorous, be it said, to such as are acquainted with the customs of our country people, but which in themselves alone do not constitute what may properly be called poetry.

Mitre wrote these words in 1854, in editing the definitive collection of his poems, or much before *Martín Fierro*. With them we are brought face to face with the question of the gauchesque vocabulary and primitive technics. Echeverría had transplanted the theoretical and universal foundations of romanticism and he had attempted in *La cautiva* its concrete application to a local theme. Mitre carried this principle forward by producing his *Santos Vega*, and, from his notes subsequent to the death of Echeverría, a counterpart of the vulgar poetry. For the purpose, the poet drew near to the real sources of the art that he combated, and he sought to idealize the model in word and emotion, departing, to that end, from the language he repudiated. The title of his work, *A Santos Vega* (*payador argentino*), was taken from popular tradition; from tradition were taken likewise, for the epigraph, these two verses attributed to the legendary *payador:*

> *¡Cantando me han de enterrar,*
> *Cantando me he de ir al cielo!*[17]

Then the poem narrates in simple, singable octosyllables the legend of Santos Vega, singer, and of his defeat in the *payada*[18] with the devil. Mitre, who lived during his youth on *estancias* of the south, had gathered from the mouths of the *gauchos* themselves the tradition he poetized. He renders his narrative concrete by the introduction of precise allusions, which proclaim sources of immediate reality, both in verse, in which he describes the protagonist as buried at El Tuyú, and in a note that substantiates the truth of the sad episode. He said:

> The historical Santos Vega died of sorrow because he was beaten by a young man in a song that the *gauchos* called counterpoint; when the inspiration of the improviser's mind failed, his life was extinguished.

Popular tradition held that the unknown

[16] Mitre confessed that his muse had become mute in 1846, as may be seen in the prologue to the *Rimas*.

[17] Singing they will have to bury me,
Singing shall I go to heaven!—THE EDITOR.

[18] A duel in the payadoresque style, that is, a troubadour contest of verse and song.—THE EDITOR.

singer was the devil, because only he could have beaten Santos Vega; and if the testimony of Mitre, the commentator, was so categorical when he spoke of the *payador*, let us see how Mitre, the poet, spoke when he addressed himself to the vanquished *payador:*

¿Qué te importa si has vivido
Cantando cual la cigarra,
Al son de humilde guitarra
Bajo el ombú colosal?
Si tus ojos se han nublado
Entre mil aclamaciones,
Si tus "cielos" y canciones
En el pueblo vivirán.

Cantando de "pago" en "pago,"
Y venciendo payadores;
Entre todos los cantores
Fuiste aclamado el mejor:
Pero al fin caíste vencido
En un duelo de armonías
Después de payar dos días,
Y moriste de dolor.

Como el antiguo guerrero,
Caído sobre su escudo
Sobre su instrumento mudo,
Entregaste tu alma a Dios;
Y es fama que al mismo tiempo
Que tu vida se apagaba
La bordona reventaba
Produciendo un triste son.[19]

Let us pass over certain halting phrases of this poem (such as the consonant rime *guitarra* with *cigarra*, and the quoting of a word like "pago," which is of Latin origin and pure enough, although it is usually thought to be an Argentinism; and the structure—not wholly spontaneous or well cadenced—of the verses. Let me point out, on the other hand, in praise of this poem, the priority and nobility of its intention. It was Mitre's purpose to produce a cultured elegy, with subject, protagonist and landscape drawn from patriotic tradition and environment, and he anticipated, with the vacillations of a first effort, what three decades later was accomplished by don Rafael Obligado, that is, the composition of a pampan elegy. Hence we feel to-day, in Mitre's legends, the presence of a still immediate reality:

Tu alma puebla los desiertos,
Y del sur en la campaña,
Al lado de una cabaña
Se eleva fúnebre cruz;
Esa cruz bajo de un tala,
Solitario, abandonado,
Es un símbolo adorado
En los campos del Tuyú[20].

After having established in these verses the true elements of tradition, he universalised the dead personage by the collective mystery of the legend:

Duerme, duerme, Santos Vega.
Que mientras en el desierto
Se oiga ese vago concierto,
Tu nombre será inmortal;
Y lo ha de escuchar el gaucho,
Tendido en su duro lecho,
Mientras en pajizo techo
Cante el gallo matinal.

Duerme mientras de despierte
Del alba con el lucero,
El vigilante tropero
Que repita tu cantar,
Y que de bosque en llanura,
En el repunte o la yerra,
Se alce por toda la tierra
Como un coro colosal.

Y mientras el gaucho errante
Al cruzar por la pradera

[19] What avails thee if thou hast lived it
Singing like a wee cicada,
To the humble guitar's strumming,
'Neath the colossal ombú?
If thine eyes are now o'erclouded
'Mid a thousand acclamations,
If thy ballads and thy glories
In the people e'er will live?

From ranch to ranch hast gone singing
And defeating *payadores*;
From among a world of singers
They acclaimed thee as the best;
But at length thou fellest beaten
In a duel of harmonies,
After two full days of singing,
And of sorrow thou didst die.

Like a warrior of past ages,
Fallen dead upon his buckler,
On thine instrument, now silent,
Didst thou yield thy soul to God;
At the same time, runs the story,
That thy life was ebbing quickly,
The G-string in twain was broken,
Giving out a doleful sound.—THE EDITOR.

[20] Thy soul inhabits the deserts;
And far in the southern lowlands,
By the side of a lone cabin,
Stands a funereal cross;
That cross underneath a *tala* [an Argentine tree],
Solitary and abandoned,
Is ever an adored symbol
Of the lands of the Tuyú.—THE EDITOR.

Se detenga en su carrera
Y baje de su alazán,
Y ponga el poncho en el suelo
A guisa de pobre alfombra,
Y rece bajo esa sombra,
¡Santos Vega, duerme en paz![21]

By a process similar to that of this elegy, Mitre composed in this period of his youth the other poems that complete the book *Armonías de la pampa.* Such was the "picture of customs" called *El pato:* a hardy and manly sport of the *gauchos*, in which parties of dashing horsemen disputed over a duck thrust up to the neck in a sack; such were *El caballo del gaucho,* the *Ombú en la pampa* and other poems on the insurgent *montoneras*[22] in the time of the revolution of Chascomús. The gauchesque tendency of the author is evident in that part of his work, and if he did not achieve perfection in other respects, he merited the glory of priority, already mentioned, in the exposition of the new doctrine that this attempt awakened in him, for he said:

Both in painting and in statuary, artistic truth is not material truth, for that is not the best portrait which most exactly copies the defects; so also poetic truth is very different from real truth, that is, without being precisely a transcript of every-day life itself, it is, nevertheless, up to a certain point, its idealization, which, without losing sight of the original, illuminates it with the colors of the imagination, groups about it the elements that are not often united in a single individual, and which, notwithstanding, exist dispersed, and, being brought together, form what is called "a type." Thus it is that I have always understood poetry, and thus it has been understood by all the great masters, if we study their works with attention. The elegy of *Santos Vega* is but an ingenuous application of this theory: in it I have tried to rise somewhat above real life, without losing sight of local color and without ceasing to keep myself on a level the with imagination of the people. In other respects, it is founded on the popular tradition that made of Santos Vega a kind of myth, which lives in the memory of all, wrapped in the impressive clouds of mystery.

With these words Mitre took a stand in favor of that noble esthetic tradition that had its philosopher in Plato, its painter in Leonardo, its poet in Poe, its sculptor in Rodin, its musician in Grieg. With the intuition of genius and a rare aptitude of spirit, he understood that those rude countrymen and their humble customs and even their very superstitions could be elevated by the exaltation of poetry to the luminous sphere of an art both chaste and universal.

That Mitre should arrive at the gauchesque conception of Santos Vega ought not to surprise us, because he was educated, as I have said, on the *estancias* of the pampa, and because he had lived later, as a soldier and a politician, in direct contact with the popular traditions. Many years subsequently, in 1874, when Mitre was an ex-president of the republic, his friend, Vecuña Mackenna (a friend from the time of the proscription) wrote him, saying: "These brave *gauchos* that you have so often led into battle;" and he that had been president did not disdain the idea. On the contrary, he treasured the letter among the "historial" documents of his archives.[23]

Mitre remained faithful to his affection for gauchesque subjects, but he always retained his dislike of the vulgar prosody. In 1872, in expressing an opinion of José Hernández's *Martín Fierro,* he recalled,

[21] Sleep now, sleep now, Santos Vega,
For, as long as in the desert
Is heard afar this vague concert,
Immortal will by thy name;
It must be heard by the *gaucho,*
On his rugged couch extended,
While on the thatched roof upstanding
Crows the matutinal cock.

Sleep then until be awakened
With the pale star of the morning
The restless, vigilant drover,
Who will sing again thy song,
And which, from plateau to forest,
Off the tune or following it,
Like a mighty chorus rolls
Wildly filling all the welkin.

And while the wandering *gaucho,*
As he goes across the meadow,
Pauses anon in his gallop,
And from his courser alights,
And on the ground spreads his *poncho*
In token of meager carpet,
And prays 'neath his horse's shadow,
Santos Vega, sleep in peace.—The Editor.

[22] Irregular bands of armed and mounted men usually at strife with the existing government, in whose eyes they are regarded as outlaws: South American usage.—The Editor.

[23] See the *Archivo de Mitre,* published by *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, volume 21.

in his letter of April,[24] the conceptions of the time of his *Santos Vega*, saying to him:

> As to my way of judging and interpreting this kind of poetry, you will find an example and a theory in the compositions and the complementary note that you will see in the book I send you in return for yours. After you read my critical note, you will not be surprised that I explain to you with frankness that I think you have somewhat abused naturalism and that you have exaggerated the local color in the verses without meter that you have scattered intentionally through your pages, as well also as in certain barbarisms that were not indispensable to placing the book within the reach of all the world, by lifting the vulgar intelligence to the level of the language in which are expressed ideas and sentiments common to man.

It should be well understood that this censure of the form of *Martín Fierro* did not prevent his eulogizing Hernández's poem, whose merits he estimated with discernment.

IV

THE CAREER OF THE AUTODIDACT

THE decade that began with 1830 was approaching its close when the despotism of Rosas became entrenched in Buenos Aires, and don Ambrosio Mitre and his family had again gone to live in Uruguay. The young Argentine found himself at home on those shores, which were likewise Argentine, and which were, besides, the country of his father and of Delfina de Vedia, the attractive sweetheart whom, years later, he was to make his wife. The cosmopolitan environment of Montevideo softened his manners, broadened his spirit and disquieted his will. The harbor, filled with ships, contrasted with the lonely southern Patagones where he had grown up, and the far-away Europe with which the illustrious man was to become acquainted. The young warrior began to sing. Tall, elegant, finely formed, with a bronzed complexion, chestnut hair, falling in waves over his spacious brow, an eager nose and clear, soft eyes, his strikingly romantic profile already stood out among his contemporaries, animated, as he was, by a strong passion both for arms and for letters. Ambition for glory burned in his heart, and the moment had arrived in which the path of destiny was to be chosen. That was the hour in which the incipient personality of Bartolomé Mitre entered the highways of history.

Mere mention of his literary works is sufficient to indicate Mitre's importance in the history of our culture.

The principal works of Mitre are: *Historia de Belgrano y de la independencia argentina* (three volumes); *Historia de San Martín y de la emancipación americana* (four volumes); *Comprobaciones históricas* (two volumes); *Catálogo razonado de las lenguas americanas* (three volumes); *Páginas de historia; Belgrano y Güemes; Rimas; Arengas; Correspondencia;* and numerous lesser works. As a translator, he left versions of Dante, Horace, Hugo and other foreign poets. His also was the work of compiling and arranging the *Archivo de San Martín* (published in twelve volumes); the *Archivo de Belgrano* (of which several volumes have been published); his own archives; and those of Pueyrredón, Artigas, Rivadavia and other founders. Among his intellectual enterprises may also be included *La Nación*, founded by him; the formation of his American library and archives, the basis of the present Museo Mitre; and his support of all our intellectual enterprises from 1852 to 1906. Our leading critics, journalists and historians have written on him, but his glory is still in process of elaboration, as the adversary of the tyranny of Rosas, as a statesman of the period of national organization, as the historian of Argentine independence and as a leader in American culture. If the lack of a biography of Mitre, after the manner of the histories of Belgrano and San Martín that he wrote, is lamentable, it is also lamentable that his works—although republished several times—have not yet been collected in a definitive edition, as has already been done in the cases of his contemporaries Sarmiento and Alberdi. Mitre's writings, as has been seen, would reach more than thirty volumes.

An extraordinary autodidact, he made

[24] *Martín Fierro*: critical opinions inserted in the edition of 1894, in my possession.

himself, by his own efforts alone, an artilleryman of the schools, in a period of barbarism (1838–1853); he founded later, parties, colleges, institutions of culture (1853–1896); he was, successively or simultaneously, a mathematician, poet, philosopher, orator, philologist, bibliographer, historian, soldier, journalist, ruler: a man of action and a man of dreams at all times. His precocity, was, besides, extraordinary; the fertility and variety of his genius were as singular as the consistency of his character. A refugee from Buenos Aires in the time of Rosas, he afterward trod all roads, winning for himself all honors. The mere enunciation of his "claims" and "acts" would require many pages. His glory was so great that, because of its loftiness and complexity, it could only be expressed in a book, or in a word: his name. It is sufficient to say that he went entirely through the whole official register, from color-bearer to brigadier-general: all the political positions, from deputy to president; all the romantic adventures, from the quiet joys of the home, to tragic proscriptions; all the official ceremonies, from the review of troops before battle, to diplomatic embassies after victory; all the intellectual enterprises, from learning native languages, to the investigation of heroic biographies; all the manly tastes, from the fragrant cigar of the man of the world, to the rare editions of the bibliophile; all the popular successes, from intellectual triumphs, to the civic jubilee (1901). His life was linked with the history of seven nations: Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Perú, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay. A life so long and broad bursts the mold of personal biographies, for it belongs to collective history, and it rises above his external acts, because of the emanant psychological interest of its very harmony and complexity. Mitre was the great multiple and superior man, according to the classic type of the European Renaissance, vouchsafed to our American republics as a numen and an example in their initial period. Therefore the death of Mitre was an apotheosis (1906). Consecrated by the love of his people, his death was the death of a patriarch.

A symbol of the glory of Mitre, as an intellectual leader, is the statue of bronze that stands in the court of the Museo Mitre. In that institution is preserved almost all the iconography of Mitre, as abundant and varied as that of Victor Hugo is in the congener museum. In several Argentine institutions there are images of Mitre. A school of the capital and several schools of the interior bear his name.

Mitre wore a beard and his hair long during his extended historical career, from his youth until his old age, without other variation than the diminution natural to the passing of the years. In the portraits of his gallant youth are to be recognized the serene man of mature age, and vice versa. He showed a predilection for civil dress, although he was a general: a frock-coat, on ceremonial occasions; a sack-coat, ordinarily; a soft hat, almost always. Hence the statue of the Museo is one of the most synthetic and characteristic of the statues of Mitre, while the projected monument of Calandra, equestrian and martial, does not interpret the true intellectual and moral greatness of the man glorified.

V

ON THE EVE OF GLORY

I HAVE quoted in another passage of this article the words that Echeverría devoted to Mitre in the "Glance" that precedes the *Dogma*, in the edition of 1845:

> Señor Mitre, a scientific artilleryman, a soldier at Cagancha and at the siege of Montevideo, acquired, from his early youth, no little reputation as a thinker and poet. His poetry is distinguished from that of his contemporaries by the manly frankness of its movement and by a certain timbre of voice that reminds us of the vigorous intonation of Callimachus and Tyrtæus. He is at present engaged in historical studies, that will doubtless win for him new laurels.

It has pleased me to repeat here, literally, Echeverría's judgment, because it presents to us three aspects of Mitre's public activity: action, poetry and history—thoroughly defined from his youth—and because this judgment is to serve for other

remarks on the biography of Mitre and the merit of his verses.

I have reason to believe that Mitre did not belong to the first group of the Asociación de Mayo,[25] and that his friendship with Echeverría and the influence of the latter on him date from an earlier period: the time when the two refugees were in Montevideo. Whether on account of this or because he was absent from Buenos Aires or because he did not study in the schools, the truth is that the name of Bartolomé Mitre does not appear in the correspondence and memorials that refer to those first years of the romantic disquietude. If we recall that in 1835, in the time of the "Salón de Sastre," or in 1836, during that of Echeverría's association, Mitre was only fifteen or sixteen years old, its absence will appear more explicable. It is true that another as young as he—Marmol—took part in that first undertaking; but this privilege was due to a class-room friendship —whether of the Colegio de Ciencias Morales, the Liceo Mora y de Angelis or the university, institutions that Mitre did not attend. I think, however, that after he had resided on the *estancia* of the Rosases, and before he went to Montevideo, Bartolomé Mitre, a youth then unknown, was in Buenos Aires, and to the days of that stay are to be referred these verses of exile:

¡O patria! ¡O Buenos Aires! ¡O sueño de mi vida!
Como inmortal recuerdo reinas en mi memoria
Recorriendo los días de dicha promisoria
Que en tu seno amoroso, Buenos Aires, pasé.
Recuerdo la ribera do a meditar yo iba,
Y el árbol perfumado que sombra me prestaba,
Recuerdo los momentos en que se deslizaba
Mi vida por un lago sereno de placer.[26]

The sweetness of this recollection contrasted afterward with the allusions to the life of the proscripts; and a longing imagination painted urban scenes—their squares, their women, their festivals—mingled with other emotions of popular life.

According to a certain reference of Lamarque, Mitre published in Buenos Aires, about 1836, some poems "whose accents have been lost;" but even if this doubtful information be true, I insist on believing his literary vocation did not become conscious until 1838, in Montevideo, where his contributions to *El Iniciador* appeared at the time, he becoming one of the group of Andrés Lamas, Miguel Cané, Félix Frías, Juan Bautista Alberdi, Juan María Gutiérrez—editors of publications—all older than he and of broader reading.[27]

Then he became acquainted with Florencio Varela and later with Echeverría, who arrived in 1840. Only from that time can we consider him an "initiate" of the new school. To this period belong also his military beginnings, which were a necessity of the struggle against Rosas, and his introduction to the study of history, which was also a branch recommended by the new school.

In the career of arms, he was to rise to the generalship; in historical studies, he was to advance to the monumental biographies of Belgrano and San Martín; but if he then persisted in these courses of action and study, he did not persist with similar earnestness in the cultivation of poetry. From 1839–1842 date almost all his verses, and he confessed in his old age that he had written no poetry save at the tender age of twenty years. In collecting his poetical works in the volume entitled

[25] "Association of May;" organized by Esteban Echeverría, after his return from Europe; its principles were expressed in Echeverría's *Dogma socialista*, and it was composed of a group of patriots opposed to the tyrant Rosas.—THE EDITOR.

[26] O Patria! O Buenos Aires! O dream of all my living!
Like an immortal recollection in my mind thou reignest,
Backward traveling o'er the days of promissory blisses,
Which in thy loving bosom, Buenos Aires, I have passed.
I remember the shores where I used to seek meditation,
And the incense-breathing tree that to me vouchsafed its shadow;
And I remember the moments in which my life went gliding
Across the even surface of a tranquil, pleasant lake.—THE EDITOR.

[27] According to Zinny, his first verses, entitled, *No tengo un nombre*, were published in *El Iniciador* of Montevideo in 1838. For the reference of Lamarque, see Biedma's *Mitre*, page 13; for that of Zinny, see the *Historia de la prensa del Uruguay*, page 211. On this same page are mentioned other verses published in *El Iniciador: La oración; Su acento; Mi estrella; El poeta*, et cetera (1838–1839), some not included in the *Rimas*.

Rimas, which Casavalle printed after Caseros,[28] Mitre said in the prologue:

The poems that may be read here were all written when I was twenty years old. I then dreamed of immortality, and the laurels of Homer drove away my sleep. I soon came to understand that I could not aspire to live in the memory of more than one generation as a poet, and that our society was not sufficiently mature to produce a poet-laureate. Nevertheless, what little of poetry God deposited in my soul, I have poured out by the wayside of my life, consecrating it sometimes to my country; at others, to my frends; at others, to the pure and serene affections of the home; because he that recognizes that his verses will certainly not go down to posterity ought to be generous with his small treasure.[29]

Mitre himself gave us, in these words, the critical instrument with which we ought to judge him, after the changes that his sensibility and technic had experienced during the latter half of the century. It was with this in mind that Rubén Darío, in his lecture on Mitre as a poet, delivered in the theater of Buenos Aires, was pleased to praise the illustrious rimer.

[28] A battle fought between the party of patriotism and reconstruction and the tyrant Rosas in 1852, when Rosas was finally overthrown.—THE EDITOR.

[29] *Rimas:* page LIV.

(To be concluded in the next English number).

PAN AMERICANISM AND COMPANY

BY

ALFREDO COLMO

The author, a sincere believer in the need of a good understanding and a proper and reasonable degree of coöperation between the American countries, tartly discusses what he conceives "Pan Americanism" to be at the present time. In his discussion of the attitude of certain Hispanic-American countries toward the United States—in which he is friendly enough—he does not overlook what he deems to be our shortcomings, but, on the other hand, neither does he assume that the current and often repeated censures of our course of action—it is impossible to call it a policy—are always justified; and he strongly protests against his nation or, indeed, any nation's making common cause with another nation against the United States, merely because of "con-fraternity," "community of race and tongue," "similar ideals," which he says, "may be nothing more than vain babbling and diplomatic artifice."—THE EDITOR.

THE IRONY revealed by the title that I have just placed at the head of this article is quite intentional. I am trying to give emphasis to the inharmony, and at times the antinomy itself, that is wont to exist between the conception and the reality to which it ought to correspond.

Pan Americanism ought to be a sentiment and a conduct addressed to an ideal. This sentiment and this conduct would presuppose, like everything psychological, an indispensable physical basis, which in the case could not rest on anything less than the positive facts of intercommunication among the different American countries by means of roads and railway lines, steamers, telegraphs and all the rest, in commerce, in culture . . . everything that effectually draws together and vinculates, and that compels a reciprocal acquaintanceship. This "physical" basis—which I have barely outlined—presupposes, as in all complex organizations, the double consolidation—organic and psychological—of each of its units, that is, of each of the countries that would be included in Pan Americanism; for the unity and vigor of the whole could never spring from the disunion and instability of the elements that constitute it.

This is what "ought to be." What "is" is not a little removed from it. The basic truth—and I do not take exceptions into account—is that Pan Americanism has not gone any farther than a word and a mere dream, exactly because what is organic and what is consolidated in each of the American countries is not yet a fact.

Any one that is acquainted with our countries will accept this affirmation that I have just made, without asking to have it demonstrated. I can not pause to do so now, as my present purpose is not that of describing the real essence and scope of Pan Americanism. On the other hand, there are only too many proofs, in a thousand manifestations of life and in not a few publications—I myself have published a whole book on the subject—that demonstrate the fundamental correctness of the affirmation.

What I intend to point out here is the inevitable derivation of Pan Americanism, and that in a double sense.

Be it said at once, the ideal Pan Americanism to which I have referred can boast of very incidental, secondary or incomplete expressions. Intercommunication is barely sporadic. We have maritime or fluvial communications between two or three neighboring countries, but international—to say nothing of continental—railways are a myth. Commerce does not extend beyond immediate vicinities. Interchange of culture is a falsehood, if we pass over quite isolated facts or such as are too individual in character: even booksellers are unacquainted with one another, to such an extent that in order to have contact from a given country with any other it is necessary to make use of a public center, which is usually to be found in Spain, France or Italy. Even the international action of the governments has not produced the most rudimentary fruits: I allude to the Pan American congresses, which have come one after another during several

decades, and which, in general, have resulted merely in recommendations or agreements that have not been changed into practical treaties or into any common action. (I repeat that I am considering what is notable, and that I do not consider the exceptional). Even in what is merely diplomatic and conventional, that is, in what is the easiest and most expeditious of formula and simple appearance, we are leagues from any approximation, much less of any community. I have before me the *Guía del cuerpo diplomático extranjero* of the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto of the Argentine republic, for the year of grace 1921, and I find in it that, of the twenty countries that constitute Central and South America, only ten have accredited representatives in Buenos Aires.

The necessary result is that our countries are ignorant of one another; hence they are not bound together in any appreciable manner, and hence all the common "sentiments" and "ideals" with which the mouths of the phrase-makers are so frequently filled amount to nothing more than the words that express them, or at most, the individual desire of the one that invokes them.

So I am led as by the hand to the second of the two senses already noted.

I have just said that the Pan Americanism that "ought to be" is a mere fallacy. Now I propose to do the same with this other idea: that the most concrete and positive Pan Americanism that is known in our countries is that of the instrument or recourse of defense, which is not always appealed to in loyalty. Governments that conduct themselves in international affairs without much circumspection and that on this account find themselves exposed to the resulting penalties, then recall Pan Americanism to take refuge in it and raise an outcry, seeking to find in it a shield and buckler with which to defend their wrong conduct and avert the threatening penalty that is hanging over them. It is at such times that a furore is made of "sovereignty," "justice," "right," "liberty" and all the rest, as well as the invectives of "vampirism," "imperialism," "brute force," and the remaining et ceteras against the nations they have offended.

Far be it from me to suppose that it is only in this form that Pan Americanism is translated in fact. I have already remarked it. All that I affirm is that it occurs with relative frequency, so that it may not be admitted that it is in the realm of the very occasional or rare.

As will be understood, in the most of the supposed cases, the "victimized" countries are those of the Latin-American community, and the "victimizing" country is no other than the North American Union, precisely the weakest counterpoised against the strongest.

To limit myself to recent cases, I examine, with a view to illustrating with hard facts the already described workings of Pan Americanism, those of Haiti, Santo Domingo and Panamá. The cases of Colombia, México, et cetera, are somewhat remote, which diminished their timeliness.

As is known, Panamá is in a dispute with Costa Rica over boundaries. In spite of having submitted it to arbitration —to the chief justice of the United States, Mr. White, recently deceased—and in spite of the fact that the decision had been rendered definitively, Panamá has attempted to oppose by force the application of the verdict, to which end she has occupied, *manu militari*, a part of the territory formerly in dispute, thus giving rise to an entire *casus belli* with her neighbor, who has conducted herself with moderation and has prevented the breaking out of hostilities. In the face of this situation, the United States has sought to bring pressure to bear on Panamá, to compel her to obey the decision and to comply with it; and in virtue of this, Panamá is attempting to send a mission of propaganda to the Union and to the Latin-American countries for the purpose of obtaining her rights and establishing claims.

Something of the same kind has been undertaken in Haiti, where protest is being made against occupation by the United States, and where outcry is raised against the abuses inflicted by her representatives.

At bottom, the situation in Santo Domingo is the same.

Not to prolong the discussion, I prefer to confine my study to one of these three cases, and I take the last of them. The

Panaman mission, up to the present time, is not an accomplished fact, at least in respect of our country, and the antecedents of the situation are not yet complete. The "case" of Haiti is the same as that of her neighbor (as is known, the two countries occupy the island of Haiti), and it may be included with that of the Dominican republic; and the latter is the more notable: the prospective "mission" has been among us for some months, and the subject is again being agitated in recent days by the publication of an article in one of our great dailies.

I am going to set forth therefore the case of Santo Domingo, in the light of the most impartial data that it has been possible for me to find.

I remark at the outset that my object is not to sit in judgment on the international policy of the United States, even in respect of the continent. Much less am I inclined to place it in the best of lights. I am well aware that this policy, in not a few cases, has been neither Pan American nor just. I could cite, as cases in point, the most notorious ones of the dismemberment of Colombia by the setting off of Panamá, fostered by the United States, and the illegal interference carried on in México during the last ten or fifteen years. Even in respect of our country, I could mention the series of acts of interested pressure with which she sought to force us to embark on her martial policy or tendency during the recent war. I do not hold therefore that the United States is angelic, and I recognize more than one grave mistake in her conduct of international affairs.

What I am going to say then may or may not argue justifiable acts on the part of the Union: this is a matter of indifference to me here. If I make note of it, it is because, according to my judgment, it contains positive facts and indisputable truths that cause the situation of Santo Domingo to stand out in relation to the United States.

I may be reminded, it is true, that in the most of the Latin-American countries, opinion and sentiment are opposed to the United States; but it should be borne in mind that in the majority of these countries this opinion, aside from facts that give it support, is based on a circumstance that does it little honor: it is a case of nations indebted to the Union, with internal policies that are neither very fraternal nor very secure: and which, in the weakness of their impotency, cry out against one that is much stronger than they, and that to-morrow might be able to call them to order. The truth is that, in the broad sense, there is not a single country of Latin America that is not penetrated pacifically by the United States, and thus she dominates in all parts by dint of her commerce, her industries, her finances and her culture; but if there is any blame in this, it is not imputable to the Union. It would be equally in our power to have the North American initiative, spirit of enterprise, faith in action, less concern over petty politics and the revolutionary tendency, more schools, more science, more morality and more uprightness.

The fulmination against the United States in our countries has therefore an excessively one-sided origin.

When, however, one comes face to face with conclusions such as those reached by Samuel G. Inman, in his book, *Intervention in Mexico*, the Latin-American *communis opinio* seems to find some foundation. Inman—who is not an official functionary, but who serves as secretary of the Committee on Coöperation in Latin America, whose activity is, above all else, educational, religious and broadly social—wrote his book after an extended visit to México, and he asserted that the North American government let itself be too much influenced by the capitalists that possessed interests in the sister country, provoking for this purpose more than one intervention and more than one revolt, whose factors were of a character predominantly financial and private. We have to do here with an author beyond suspicion: the instrument of a mission, himself a missionary, with the soul of a hero, who has gone through each of our countries more than once, the *deus ex machina* of that great religious, educational and social congress held some five years ago at Panamá, whose proceedings and reports circulated in three thick volumes; Inman, who is also

a clergyman, although he does not practice as a "reverend," has full right to be believed.

When, a few months ago, I received his book, *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti*, I expected to come upon something similar; but I was not a little disappointed. I found his usual sincerity, his anxiety to know, *sur place*, the characteristics of a people and the independent courage of his judgments, but I did not find abuse of his compatriots.

It is because, indeed, circumstances vary. México is a land of petroleum and all the rest; Santo Domingo is a mere debtor and a small market. México has not been occupied in the military sense; Santo Domingo has been so occupied.

Antecedents have varied with conditions, and it is well to know this in order to form an opinion; and it is necessary to turn on the light, inasmuch as the subject is timely, in view of the Dominican mission already alluded to, which is making a tour of the continent, in search of auspices for its protest against occupation by the United States.

Set forth synthetically therefore, the antecedents may be reduced to the following: the United States, as a creditor of Santo Domingo, celebrated with that republic a *modus vivendi*, in virtue of which, in order to guarantee what was due her and, above all, to prevent the international action of creditor governments, such as France, Italy and Belgium, appointed a functionary charged with receiving the customs revenues in behalf of the different creditors; on the ground of a revolution against President Jiménez, then in office, and with his consent, the United States disembarked eighteen hundred men at different ports; this did not prevent Jiménez, ill and broken down, from renouncing his position: whereupon, a few months afterward, the congress elected a president *pro tempore*, until recourse should be had, six months later, to a general election, which resulted in favor of Francisco Henríquez Carvajal; and, as the latter undertook to be president, contrary to what had been agreed upon, and as the financial conditions stipulated were not complied with by the Dominican government, the United States occupied the country militarily, by a proclamation in which the circumstances that led to it were set forth, and there was a definite statement of the express condition that the occupation did not imply "a destruction of the sovereignty of the republic," since it would confine itself to maintaining order, which had been disturbed, and to the carrying out of the treaty mentioned.

That was four years and some months ago. It seems that the occupation has been prolonged excessively, to judge by the complaints of which the mission alluded to is the echo. So, at a distance, it is not easy to express a conclusive opinion in the case. I think, however, that there are sufficient elements on which to base a judgment in order not to permit ourselves to be carried away by the propaganda that is being carried on by the mission referred to, and to enable us to view events with the objectivity of their teachings and to do definitive justice by hearing both sides, and not one side only, and on the basis of reasons, and not of mere impressions.

The propaganda already mentioned possesses a certain justification: that of the patriotism of its members; but I fear that the mission itself is far from able fully to justify its authority, however much it invokes the "national *junta*" that accredited it. If this *junta* emanates from the people, there is nothing to be said in reply: a people is never wrong, although it be mistaken. . . . If it does not emanate from the people, but from some circle, it fails to represent.

The latter seems to be more probable.

Above all, because its members bear the same surname, and one of them in both terms, as that of the deposed president. These members belong to a family of lettered and cultured people in Santo Domingo, as happens to be the case; this does not prevent them from taking it on themselves to represent a dominant family rather than a circle, not to speak of the people, and it leaves margin for the thought that the mission is ventilating interests too personal, instead of public interests.

When therefore one of the members has said among us, as has occurred, that they have come "with the suffering of a people

on their backs," he is uttering a pretty phrase, and an effective one, but he has left a doubt as to whether by means of it he has expressed a reality. I did not see it demonstrated in any manner then, nor have I seen it since.

It is well to appeal to sentiment, but it is better to speak the truth. A literary phrase is pleasing, but we are a little sick of phrases of this kind. In truth, some abuse has been made, cleverly enough, it is true, of such things as "confraternity," "community of race and tongue," "similar ideals," and all the rest of the commonplaces, which in all strictness, may be nothing more than vain babbling and diplomatic artifice. Confraternity and all the rest are based, as I have already said, on foundations that in most cases are wanting: vinculation by means of railways and steamships, international commerce, interchange of culture and other things that bring peoples together are much better than discourses.

We have had plenty of exploitation, with no little tactfulness, of the relative similarity of the condition of the Latin-American countries, whose peoples are so impressionable, so spontaneously generous toward the weak, so "natively" hostile toward the powerful; and thus one can arrive at all the uneducativeness of a palpable lie.

Of the following I have evidence: that the North American occupation has aroused the opposition of the Dominican politicians alone. The rest of the population not only has not regretted its presence, but, in some cases, it has gone so far as to praise it and request that it continue. So it is with the journalists, who have enjoyed a liberty they did not have before for the expression of their opinions. So it is with the merchants and industrials, who have been able to develop in a confidence and security that have resulted from a condition undisturbed by revolts, formerly only too frequent. It is so too with the people in general, who have been brought face to face with progressive educational enterprises that they had not seen thitherto.

At bottom this is a double truth.

The Dominican governments have accomplished nothing much—and this is true of almost all of the Latin-American governments—for the public good. During the seventy years of her independent life, the republic has had nineteen constitutions, by means of which it has sought to minister to the happiness of the people, although the fact remains that this happiness is obtained by works, and not by unenforced or violated laws. In the same period of time, forty-three presidents or dictators have passed through the government, of whom only three have filled out their regular terms; for revolutions have occurred with excessive frequency. The people possessed no internal highways, even for horses; and comfortable hotels and all the rest for travelers were practically unknown. In spite of the marvelous richness of the soil, the public resources per inhabitant have not reached the half of ours; and two-thirds of them have resulted from taxation of the most unjust kind, which is that of customs duties; the international commerce, per inhabitant, has not attained to the fourth part of the Argentine; and the railways, also computed on the basis of the average per inhabitant, do not total even a tenth of ours. A country that was the first of the continental colonies and that has the most ancient and venerable monuments of the Spanish domination ought at least to possess schools and libraries. Such a country deserves a much better fate than that which is shown by the possession of only nineteen postal communications per annum for each inhabitant, while among us—who are not, either in this or anything else, the eighth wonder of the world—they exceed a hundred and fifty. I may say the same of the proportion of her illiterate population, which is ninety-five per cent. and of the percentage of her illegitimate children, which exceeds sixty per cent.

It is true that there predominates in the country—even if less than in Haiti—an African and native element that retains many more survivals of a past of servitude and slavery in the former plantations.

I do not discuss reasons, however; I give the facts. In the presence of them,

it is necessary to face the stern reality, by accomplishing a positively patriotic task of developing public works, education and honest and far-seeing government.

This is what has been done, in part at least, by the North Americans. I do not say that it is so because they have sought the well-being of the Dominicans, strictly speaking. Altruisms of this kind are unknown in international life. I can not say what is the total motive: I suspect that they have looked ahead, and have had an eye to the greater benefit that would be yielded by the market.

Be what it may the reason, the fact stands, that they have opened roads, constructed railways, erected hospitals, scattered schools—elementary, rural, commercial and industrial—and have carried on by means of them a great enterprise of culture.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Dominican sovereignty continues to be affected. . . . Let us not be dazzled by startlingly luminous words, however. There are sovereignties and sovereignties. When any one violently snatches a cigarette from the mouth of a boy that is pale from nicotine poisoning and berates him and takes him home, or when he interferes to prevent a person from committing a crime, this "any one" does not begin by discanting on individual sovereignties or autonomous rights, or on the inalienableness of the patrimony of personality. . . . I do not affirm that such is the case in point; I merely mean to say that the mere invocation of sovereignty may turn out to be the invocation of no very great thing.

As for myself, I entertain no doubt. The United States has not the most remote interest in robbing the Dominicans of their independence; as soon as she shall obtain what belongs to her by agreement, she will withdraw from the second "pearl of the Antilles." What attracts her is the market, not the soil; and she can secure the market without the necessity of any occupation. As for the rest, if she had desired, the Caribbean republic would have belonged to the Union ever since 1869, when the movement for incorporation in this sense was so strong. The Union did not desire it, as she did not desire it in the more important case of Cuba.[1]

Behold the "case" of Santo Domingo; behold, apropos of it, a specimen of what in practice is wont to be understood by Americanism in the most of our countries!

As ought to be evident, I do not assert that this situation corresponds—if the case of Haiti be excepted—to that of the other Latin-American countries that have been or are in "conflict" with the United States. What I have desired to do has been to present one of the cases, in order that it might be possible to judge of others with it as a basis, however different they may be, specifically, in respect of it.

As for the rest, I am well aware that these reflections of mine will be looked upon as but slightly "Americanist," and even less as "friendly." I am well aware also that Americanism and friendship are conceived of in a sense that is not mine. It is conceived to be a good deed to aid a country by helping it in any situation whatsoever, even in that of falsehood or misconduct itself; and I consider that it is exactly then that we do the greatest harm: we are helping to justify or to whitewash an act of dishonesty or to render permanent a régime that is working ruin.

Pan Americanism is an ideal and a virtue. As an ideal, it presupposes the assistance of all that may effectively contribute to it. As a virtue, it implies work, culture, truth and morality. Pan Americanism must not be a word or a great discourse. Pan Americanism may not be a shield or a pretext. Americanism and friendship must be based on a sentiment of the efficient and disinterested function of government for the people, and on the strictest truth and honesty,

The abolition of a false Pan Americanism would call for congratulations. True Pan Americanism would arise of itself, it would make its way unaided, slowly and with not a few stumblings, it is true, but, if you will, far from everything that deforms and even vitiates and destroys.

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[1]Events have proved these affirmations of our collaborator. Since he delivered to us the original of this article, the newspapers have published the cable dispatches with the news that the United States is preparing to end, within a few months, the military and political occupation of the island here described.—Note of the editor of *Nosotros*.

THE HISTORY OF COTTON

BY

JOAQUÍN OLMEDILLA Y PUIG

The importance of the subject.—Etymology of the word "cotton" and its meaning in several languages.—Principal kinds of plants that yield it.—Its antiquity.—The knowledge of it among the Chinese.—Ideas on this subject set forth by Herodotus, Theophrastus, Strabo and Pliny.—"Wool grows on trees."—Cotton mentioned in passages of the Bible.—The importance of Spain in the history of cotton.—The first cotton garments used in Europe.—The part played by trees in the cultivation of the cotton plant.—The epoch of cotton culture in Italy, France, England and the United States.—Cotton in the conquest of México.—Certain poets mention this fiber.—When cotton spinning began in the United States.—Great importance of the American planters.—The progress of civilization and culture marked in the use of this material.—Conflicts of the cotton crises.—The chemistry of cotton. —Its use in medicine.—The power of science in the transformation of this material.—Pyroxylin and its history.—The centenary of cotton.—Final considerations.

IT IS not surprising that a material of such varied and constant use, one that we always wear on our bodies to a greater or less extent, one that has solved social problems of vital interest, in which hygiene, in the first place, and, afterward, industry, in their great manifestations, play a very important part, should arouse our curiosity to become acquainted with its history and should awaken us to an appreciation of the vicissitudes this substance has undergone since it occurred to mankind to apply it to the uses to which it was destined.

To cast a retrospective glance at the manifold origin and uses of cotton is, as happens in the case of many other substances, to make an excursion through the general history of human society and follow its routes, it being possible, frequently, to offer extensive and profound considerations regarding a substance that has played such an important rôle in the history of the world, from the very interesting service it renders us in clothing us and protecting our delicate and sensitive bodies from the unexpected hazards of the environment, to the occasional fostering of extensive crises that may involve the public peace in a serious manner.

We marvel, in truth, at the importance that has been attained by an object of such apparent in significance, which, inclosed within the very modest covering of a seed, has come to be a very potent element in social life and a sign of wealth, at whose impulse are placed in circulation rivers of gold and capital so great that it may exercise a veritable tyranny over values, as happens with the banking establishments and everything that holds within itself waves of riches and an immense amount of labor and capital gathered together. Therefore the history of it is like that of those copious navigable rivers, which were, at their beginning, fine threads of crystalline lymph, barely appreciable and lacking in value.

It is not my purpose at this moment to write a monograph on cotton, for to do so would require an extensive book, which it would be impossible to condense within the limits of an article; I shall therefore set down in this sketch only what stands out in the historical conception of cotton and discuss some of its applications, recalling dates and mentioning names and localities, in order that whatsoever is worthy of being known in this respect may be appreciated, and that the veil of oblivion may never cover it; for there is much in the study of it that exalts the glories of humanity and that forms one of the brilliant crowns that may be placed upon the brow of industry and the majesty of science.

The Spanish word for cotton, *algodón*, is derived from the Arabic article *al* and the substantive *ghothon* [*qútun, qútn*, cotton], which, united, give us *alghoton*, in turn derived from the Sanskrit, *kartara*, which indicates the action of spinning linen or cotton, the root of which, *kart*, means to split, to cut.

As *r* is frequently suppressed before a consonant in the more modern dialects of

India, the origin of the word under discussion can be explained. It is therefore of Arabic origin. In German, it is *baumwolle* [*kattum*]; in English, *cotton;* in Dutch, *katoen;* in Danish, *bomould* [*kattum*]; in Swedish, *bomull* [*kattum*]; in Russian, *kloptschataja bumaga;* in Italian, *cotone;* and in Portuguese, *algodão.*

Consisting of the very fine, soft fibrous substance, which, like a capillary expansion, covers the seeds of different malvaceous plants, it would at once attract attention and be utilized for the purpose for which it is designed, even if in a very limited degree. The learned botanist Linnæus retained the name *Gossypium,* which Pliny had already given to the genus to which the different species that produce cotton belong, the principal one being *Gossypium herbaceum,* which originated in upper Egypt, and which is cultivated in several regions of Asia and Africa. There are also the species: *indicum, arboreum, religiosum, barbadense, hirsutum, vitifolium, peruvianum, racemosum, micranthum, eglandulosum, latifolium,* and several others, some of which are cultivated over great areas in North and South America, and striking examples of which are to be found in many parts of the United States, México and Brazil.

Cotton is one of the most useful and beneficent of plants. By the cultivation and elaboration of it millions of people live, engaged in the manifold processes to which it gives rise, to an extent that might fill many glorious pages of the history of industry. The English people, true masters in what relates to practical life, have given to cotton the name of "king" ("king cotton"), whereby it is sought to make understood the great influence it exercises on the destinies of peoples; for it signifies a great torrent of wealth wrapped within itself, and on this account it is very appropriate to apply to it the term "king," since the production and consumption of it constitute an immense source of value.

II

COTTON fabrics have been in use from very early times. In the days of Herodotus, the East Indians used cotton cloths. In the first century of the Christian era there were already in Egypt and Arabia manufactories of these fabrics; but the Greeks and Romans seem not to have used them. The Chinese, who led the rest of the world in other knowledge, did not do so, however, in this particular, as they only began to cultivate the cotton plant after the conquest by the Tartars, that is, in the thirteenth century, at which time cotton cloths were the object of an important commerce in the Crimea and northern Russia, whither they were carried from Turkestan.

Upon its introduction into the Celestial empire the cotton-plant had to maintain a heavy and hard struggle with the manufacturers of and workers in wool and silk, and not until 1368 did cotton enter into general use there, and the people, stationary like all the peoples of their race, did not perfect the manufacture of these fabrics, which in a different case might have accomplished marvels.

In the time of Strabo, that is, four hundred and fifty years after Herodotus, cotton was cultivated at the mouth of the Persian gulf. Theophrastus mentioned, among the products of the island of Tylor, in this gulf, trees that bore wool and whose leaves were very similar to those of the grape-vine, but smaller. Adrian related that the Arabs carried cottons to a port of the Red sea, which was the center of their commerce, and that the celebrated muslins of Bengal then enjoyed the same reputation and esteem that fashion and elegance gave them later, extending down to our days.

The words of Herodotus with reference to the East Indians are very significant, if it be borne in mind that they were written four hundred and forty-five years before Christ. They are as follows:

> They have a kind of plant which, instead of a fruit, produces wool of a quality more beautiful and better than that of our lambs, and from it the Indians make their clothes.

Pliny tells us that in upper Egypt, that is, Arabia, there grew a tree that some called *Gossypium* and others *Xilon.* He said that:

> Its fruit is small and like a hazelnut, on which

there is a silken down that can be spun, and from which they make precious garments for the priests of Egypt.

It is known, indeed, that India was the cradle of the cotton industry. This fact was brought out by Strabo, in a very significant phrase, one that has passed into history, and which was: that "wool grows on trees." The patience and practice of the inhabitants of that region enabled them to obtain products that were fairly acceptable, in spite of their imperfection.

The fabrics alluded to in many passages of the Bible and sacred books were unquestionably of cotton. Rouelle asserts that the cloths in which the mummies were wrapped, and which do not contain resinous substances, were of this material.

The cultivation of cotton was fostered in Persia, Media and Babylonia, and the Phenicians and Carthaginians made it known in Greece, Malta, Sicily and Spain.

Our country [Spain] can boast of being the first in all Europe to cultivate the plant on a large scale, and the Mohammedans propagated it with great success in Andalucía.

Abu-Zacarías spoke of the cultivation of the cotton-plant in the kingdom of Granada; but it slowly declined after the expulsion of the Moors, to such an extent that at the close of the eighteenth century the cotton-plant was little more than a curiosity in the gardens of Motril.

The Catalanes, however, afterward promoted its cultivation on the Andalusian coasts, and in the first years of the nineteenth century a great business was done with the cotton of Motril, which reached its greatest height in 1817, when the fertile lowlands of the latter place produced the larger part of the cotton that was consumed in the Catalán factories, which was designed for export, chiefly to France and England; but the political conditions of our country, the customs duties, the inferiority of the product in comparison with the finished and perfect manner of putting it up abroad were the causes of the decline of this industry, until it almost vanished.

In Greece and Italy, cotton was known in the early days of Christianity.

The first attempts at acclimatizing the cotton-plant were made in Spain, in the environs of Sevilla, in the second century of the Christian era. It was propagated in the successive centuries, and during the period of Arab domination it reached its apogee, to such a point that from the tenth until the fourteenth century the cotton of Granada was superior to that of the Orient, and it enjoyed an extraordinary fame. In the latter century were established in Venice and Milan the first factories in which cotton was elaborated, and we must come down to the sixteenth century to encounter this industry in England and Flanders.

It seems that the first use of cotton in France took place in Rouen, in 1534; in Lyon, in 1580; and in Troyes, in 1582. Nevertheless, it was in the time of Colbert, the celebrated minister of Louis XIV, that the importation of cotton into France attained importance.

The first attempts to manufacture cotton fabrics in England occurred somewhat earlier than those made in France.

Fabrics of cotton, although less durable than those of hemp or flax, are recommended, among those of all the textile plants, for their excellent hygienic qualities, which protect alike from the intense heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter, and therefore they have been accepted with equal appreciation by northern countries, where they afford a comfortable protection against low temperatures, and in the hot regions where, by making perspiration easier and by quickly absorbing the moisture, they save from much sickness. It is not strange therefore that they should have met the same welcome in all parts of the world.

Besides, its slight conductibility in respect of heat renders it serviceable for really exceptional uses. Many persons are surprised to see that muslins and linens can pass with impunity over a line of flames without being burned; but this surprise vanishes as soon as it becomes known that wood fiber is a very poor conductor of heat; so that a thread of cotton, exposed to the flame of a candle, flares up at first, but the fire does not extend along the thread, for it goes out, because vegetable fiber is a bad conductor.

The first cotton garments, shown in

Europe as precious objects, date almost from the time of the crusades, and they were then mentioned in wills, along with objects of great value. In the sixteenth century, cotton was still dear, and the cotton industry did not spread with rapidity on this account.

III

IN THE middle ages, cotton was first mentioned in the twelfth century by Villehardouin, and this substance was then, as it is now, called *al koton*. Joinville asserts that hoods were then made of this material. In the first years of the fourteenth century it was employed a great deal, and it was already used, both spun and carded, as also in lamp-wicks and in the manufacture of gloves. In Sevilla, it was mixed with wool to make light fabrics. In the municipal archives of Rouen there are documents in which are mentioned, in the years 1541–1542, fifteen and a half bales of cotton that came by way of Portugal, and twelve bales, by way of England; and in 1570–1571 there is mention of the white cotton of England.

It is believed that to the Mussulmans is due the cultivation of the cotton-plant in Africa, and the elaboration and manufacture of its products. In the eighth century there were already in Morocco very flourishing manufactories, and at the end of the sixteenth century cloths made in that country were taken to London.

The cultivation of the plant was introduced into Europe in the ninth century, thanks to the Arabs of Spain. The first cotton-plants were grown on the plains of Valencia, and they supplied the first material for the manufactures of Córdoba, Granada and Sevilla, which acquired great fame.

In the year 1806, by order of the emperor Napoleon, experiments were made in France in the cultivation of the cotton-plant, for which seeds were requested of Spain, Italy and the United States, and after several efforts, it was proven that the herbaceous [the annual] cotton-plant was to be preferred.

There exist indications of the manufacture of cotton goods in Italy at the close of the fourteenth century; and at the same time the Turks introduced into Albania and Macedonia the art of weaving it. Venice and Milan took up this industry and manufactured substantial cloths from the cottons of Syria and Asia Minor. The industry extended later to Belgium.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Venetians and the Genoese exported to England cottons that were employed at first only in the manufacture of wicks. In 1430 certain weavers of Cheshire and Lancashire manufactured bombazines similar to those of Flanders. Henry VIII and Edward VI favored this industry, and in the reign of George III there were forty thousand persons engaged in this work, which produced fifteen million francs.

Cotton was first cultivated on an extensive scale in Georgia, one of the states of the American Union, in 1786. The soil was so good and appropriate that it prospered greatly, and it was necessary to increase the product in order to satisfy the demand, so much so that in 1839 the quantity of cotton exported exceeded 150,000,000 kilograms.

The establishment of the cotton industry in France dates back to the close of the seventeenth century. Amiens was one of the first cities in which the manufacture of cotton was begun on a large scale, and afterward it extended to Switzerland, Belgium and Germany.

When the conquest of México was undertaken, the Spaniards found cotton cloths, which the women wove by hand; but it is to be supposed that it had not yet attained great commercial importance in Europe at that time, because Columbus presented to Fernando and Isabel, when he reached Barcelona, specimens of cotton brought from the recently discovered regions, as if they were curious objects. What is certain is that the first explorers that accompanied Hernán Cortés found cotton growing on the banks of the Mississippi in great abundance.

For many years it has been one of the principal articles of export from the United States, and it has afforded an opportunity for the investment of much capital in a profitable manner. In *Purchas his Pilgrimage* we learn that the cotton-seed was first planted as an experi-

ment in 1621, and that the magnificent plants produced from them at that time aroused great interest in America and England. In the province of Carolina, the cultivation of the cotton-plant is noted in a document that bears the date of 1666, reproduced in B. R. Carroll's *Historial Collections of South Carolina*. In 1736 the plant was cultivated in certain gardens at 39 degrees, north latitude, on the western shores of Maryland, and forty years later it was cultivated in Cape May county, New Jersey.

It should not be overlooked that cotton has been mentioned by great poets in different works. For instance, there is allusion to it in the compositions of Béranger, La Fontaine, Delille, Voltaire and others. In Spain, well and even widely known are the verses of one that reflected most inspiration in his works—which belong to the age of gold of our literature—who said:

Vuestro don, señor hidalgo,
Es como el del algodón,
Puesto que para ser don
Necesita tener algo.[1]

Don Francisco de Rojas said:

A su casa se va, adonde
Dormirá, no en duras peñas,
Sino en blandos algodones;[2]

and Góngora exclaimed:

Siendo como un algodôn
Nos jura que es como un hueso.[3]

Many other cases could be cited, but these indicated are sufficient to serve as examples.

IV

THE CULTIVATION of cotton in America afforded more reliable and productive returns than those afforded by sugar-cane. The tree not only grew spontaneously, but in all kinds of soil: on rocks, along the sea-shore and in several other places. It was so abundant when Christopher Columbus reached those regions that in 1493 it constituted the basis of the taxes he imposed. When the Spaniards arrived, many of them became planters of cotton, and they conceived the brilliant idea of taking nature as a teacher, planting exclusively the seeds of the best native species. Therefore, as time went on, in 1776, to be exact, the cotton of the Antilles, and, in particular that of Guadaloupe, enjoyed great fame in the markets of Europe, and attained prices higher than other kinds of cotton. Afterward several causes brought about the ruin of the cotton industry in many of these regions.

In 1736, as we have already said, the first cotton was cultivated as a garden plant as far north as latitude 39 degrees, and forty years later it was introduced into Maryland, after which time its production in and exportation from North America acquired immense and growing proportions, the importance of this textile being truly marvelous, not only in all the markets of the world, but in the economy of the region mentioned, where it forms one of the principal elements of wealth and splendor.

The spinning of cotton began in the United States in 1790, although a few cloths were manufactured from this substance before that time. By the year 1815, $40,000,000 had been invested in the cotton industry. The invention in America of the cotton-gin by Lewell and Jackson,[4] and its great success in Waltham in 1813, facilitated the output of the product by obviating some of the obstacles that had presented themselves; and in the year 1822 the first cotton-mill was constructed, thus increasing to an extraordinary degree the production, thanks to the customs duties of 1824, 1828 and 1832, which protected manufacturers in a remarkable manner.

The rebellion of the cotton states in the winter of 1860 and 1861, and the blockade of their principal ports by the federal government of the United States caused

[1] Your don [gift], señor hidalgo [gentleman],
Is like that of the *algodón*,
For in order to be a *don* [man of substance]
It is necessary ro have *algo* [something].—THE EDITOR

[2] To his house he goes, wherein
He will sleep, not on hard rocks,
But on soft cottons.—THE EDITOR.

[3] Although it is like cotton,
He swears that it is like a bone.—THE EDITOR.

[4] Shades of Eli Whitney! However, as there lingers in South Carolina a tradition that the cotton-gin was really invented by a son of the state, and not by the now famous Whitney, may not this be a bit of poetic justice?—THE EDITOR.

a great diminution in the export of cotton. The withdrawal of foreign commerce was, so to speak, one of the consequences of the war, and in order to give first consideration to the subsistence of the population it was necessary to divert from the cultivation of lands set apart for cotton a multitude of laborers, who should devote themselves to the production of cereals. Formerly, however, the enormous masses of this product, of excellent quality in every way, in respect of the consistency, color, length of fiber, et cetera, led the planters of the south to think themselves the arbiters of the civilized world, and they supposed that they held in their hands the destinies of England and of the great republic of the New World. The output enabled them not only to erect sumptuous and artistic palaces in which elegance competed with wealth, but they also sent their deputies to the congress; reëstablished the trade in negroes, for a long time abolished; and forced the legislators to set up a new code, and the ministers of religion to proclaim a new gospel. Yet the cotton industry set itself in direct opposition to progress, and the moment in which the 4,000,000 slaves of the Confederate states were emancipated was for this industry a day of mourning.

As to Great Britain, it may be said that there is no example of any industry that has produced such brilliant results as this one in so short a space of time. It is true that impetus was given to its development by the discoveries of Watt, Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton, who by their powerful auxiliary mechanical means duplicated and even centuplicated the returns of the product. So important in every sense has this industry been that in 1863 its paralization and the crises that resulted made it necessary that the enormous number of 1,142,624 persons should be aided in England.

In the uses of cotton have been reflected both the progress of civilization and culture, so that the distaff and the spindle, which were the primitive spinning appliances, and which are still employed in Hindustan, were afterward followed by the spinningwheel and finally by the mechanical spinner, by which, with an extraordinary economy of time, are secured more perfect results, mechanics achieving in this respect veritable marvels, with the application of steam and electricity.

Turning to another aspect, we note that chemistry has perfectly determined the nature of cotton. A substance composed by carbon and the elements of water in the proportions necessary to form this body is therefore what is called technically *hydrate of* carbon, which forms cellulose, the kind called *xilosa* predominating, which has the property of dissolving completely in the cupro-ammoniac reagent of Peligot, forming a homogeneous liquid. The microscope, with its amplifying power, reveals that it is composed of filaments flattened and twisted in a spiral, which constitutes a criss-cross, never to be forgotten when once seen.

To it belonged therefore all the properties inherent in cellulose conceived of as pure.

The employment of cotton in surgery, although ancient, is of a date less remote than that of its industrial uses. Carded cotton, to which several forms are given, and to which different substances are added, is utilized in surgery in many ways, for which pharmacy presents it prepared properly, whether as an antiseptic or as a revulsive; but the larger number of the medicaments of which it constitutes the base belong to the present period: the preparation called hydrophilous carbolated, salicylated, sublimated, iodated, boricated, or iodoformed cotton, et cetera, and therefore they do not enter into the domain of history.

The power of science must be admired in view of the transformation that was effected when a substance as innocent and inoffensive as cotton, which gives protection and comfort, and is a mitigator of the distressing pains of the sick, was changed into a body as explosive, as fulminating, as destructive, as gun-cotton or pyroxylin, the aspect of which is the same as that of cotton—soft, flexible, white, light, tenuous —and, nevertheless, how terrible it is, if it be subjected to percussion. This dis-

[5]Datum noted in a cyclopedia for journalists, compiled with exemplary constancy and patience by the lamented writer don León María Carbonero y Sol, which has taken premiums in expositions.

covery, made by Schönbein, a professor of Basel in 1846, produced an extraordinary effect on the scientific, industrial and social world.

Indeed, in the last months of the year 1846, the newspapers began to occupy themselves with a singular discovery. A chemist of Basel—it was said—had discovered a means of transforming soft and flexible cotton into a substance, which, without changing its aspect, possessed the properties of gunpowder. The qualities of the new explosive were such that it burned without smoke, did not blacken weapons and had an explosive power three or four times as great as that of ordinary gunpowder. On October 5, 1846, there was read in the Académie des Sciences a letter from Schönbein, the discoverer of the substance, in which the properties of guncotton were described, but the method of obtaining it was not revealed. From the day following that of the memorable session, work was begun in all the chemical laboratories of Paris to discover the means of preparing the new explosive, which was supposed to be a particular form of xyloidine, already known from the year 1832, in which it was discovered by Braconnot and studied later by Pelouce, who obtained it by digesting woody materials in *aqua fortis* [nitric acid]. In truth, the idea of this discovery induced Schönbein to apply himself to the object sought, by treating raw cotton with nitric acid. At all events, Schönbein received a large premium from the German diet for the discovery: he was awarded 260,000 francs. The first person to prepare guncotton in Paris was the civil engineer Morel. However, the efficiency of the new explosive was disputed and attacked; but it was necessary to recognize its great power, as also the practical importance of utilizing it for firearms.

Schönbein at first established relations with another chemist of Frankfort—Böttger—and he submitted his discovery to the German federation. Although it was kept a profound secret, it was not long before the public learned of the method of preparing pyroxylin by means of a prolonged bath of cotton in a mixture of one part of nitric acid and three parts of sulphuric acid.

In 1859, an Austrian artillery officer—Baron Lenek—undertook to utilize a system of rifled field-guns, charged with guncotton; but the great number of explosions that occurred caused the abandonment of the explosive. Afterward, however, its use was facilitated by compression, which gave it a consistency similar to that of pasteboard. In 1871 occurred a horrible catastrophe that destroyed a factory and part of a building in Stowmarket, as a consequence of an explossion of this powder, stored in great quantities in warehouses, as a result of which it was counseled that it be left in a wet state.

In the year 1865, an Englishman—Abel—achieved great progress in the manufacture and use of pyroxylin. He prepared compressed guncotton, and by this means he believed he had prevented the dangers of its employment; but, in spite of this, the number of victims continued to increase among those that engaged in operations connected with it; and as a result the manufacture of it was prohibited in England.

However, pyroxylin was found to be capable of other than these destructive applications, for Maynard discovered in Boston in 1847 that by dissolving it in a mixture of eighteen parts of ether and three of alcohol, a substance was produced of the consistency of gelatin, which, under the name of collodion, was utilized, in photography for the preparation of the sensitive plates on which images were impressed, and in surgery in the form of an adhesive and a protection of the skin, when for any reason it is desired to prevent the contact of the air, the latest application of which was due to Parker Maynard, a student of Boston, in 1848.

That cotton was from remote times a predilect object of study on the part of men of science is proven by the fact that the Académie des Sciences of Paris awarded a prize in 1784 for a memorial entitled *Essai sur les caractères qui distinguent les cotons des diverses parties du monde, et sur les différences qui en résultent pour leur emploi dans les arts.* Its author was Quatremère Disjonval, and in it is proven, among other things, that the cotton-plant requires a warm climate, and that the fruit

produced in the old continent is thicker and rounder.

It is not strange that in 1885 there should have been celebrated in America, with great festivities, the centenary of the cotton industry and trade, which occurred at the exposition held in New Orleans, September 1, of that year, where large and artistic halls, decorated with great luxury, recalled, by an exhibition of very important products, a date so glorious in the history of the industry, and at which the splendid electrical illuminations during the night made it evident that modern discoveries lend themselves to paying honorable tribute to the memory and history of great events.

As for the rest, how much beauty and sublimity are wrapped in this passive body, which—for all its modest simplicity—confers a great benefit and serves as a sweet consolation, protecting humanity from the rigors of the bitter cold and forming the base of useful medicines, or becoming, on the contrary, a terrible explosive substance, with an immense power to hurl deadly projectiles to great distances, or, dissolved in alcoholic ether, to give life to an image in photography! Never, indeed, will time be better employed than in learning and recalling its history.

What has been set forth makes it evident that history ought to fathom all subjects; for it constitutes a precious storehouse, in the legacies of which we always find something to learn and much to admire. The scrutiny of the past is ever our best counselor, as well as the safest guide to the future. Let us study the past for our safety of to-day and our better conduct in the future. Let us not weary of searching amid the shades of the departed generations, since we shall find among them the source of intense and dazzling points of light, and the key to the future.

THE THREE CROWS

BY

JOSÉ ANTONIO CAMPOS

The Ecuadorian humorist again. Those that have read the several sketches of his that have already been published in INTER-AMERICA will be prepared to appreciate the following Ecuadorian form of the anecdote with a moral.—THE EDITOR.

"MY general!"

"Colonel!"

"I have the honor to report that something very strange is occurring in camp."

"Speak, colonel."

"I am reliably informed that one of our soldiers felt slightly unwell, at the beginning; then his discomfort increased; later he felt a terrible pain in the stomach; and finally he vomited three live crows."

"Vomited what?"

"Three crows, my general."

"*Cáspita*!"

"Doesn't it strike my general that this is a very peculiar case?"

"Peculiar, indeed!"

"And what does he think of it?"

"Colonel, I do not know what to think! I am going to report it at once to the minister. Therefore . . . there were. . . ."

"Three crows, my general."

"There must be some mistake!"

"No, my general; there were three crows."

"Well, I accept it, although I can not understand; who informed you?"

"Major Epaminondas."

"Send him to me at once, while I am sending the report."

"At once, my general."

"MAJOR EPAMINONDAS!"

"Present, my general!"

"What story is this, of the three crows that were vomited by one of our sick privates?"

"Three crows?"

"Yes, major."

"I am informed of two, and no more, my general; but not of three."

"Well, two or three, it matters little. The question is to learn whether they were in truth real crows in the case in question."

"Without a doubt, my general."

"Two crows?"

"Yes, my general."

"And how did it happen?"

"The simplest thing in the world, my general. Private Pantaleón left a sweetheart in his village, who, according to report, is a dark girl with not a little salt and pepper. What eyes she had, my general! They shone like twin stars! What a mouth! How mischievous her glance, how playful her smile, how trim her form, what a deep bosom, and what a delicious dimple in her cheek. . . . "

"Major!"

"Present, my general!"

"Be brief, and omit every unofficial detail."

"At your orders, my general."

"What was the conclusion of the story about the crows?"

"Well then: the lad was downcast because of the painful absence of her of whom we know, and would not eat or touch a thing, until at last he became very ill, with a pain in his stomach, and he began to vomit without stopping. In one of the spells, pouf! . . . two crows!"

"You took occasion to look at them?"

"No, my general; I am telling what I have heard."

"And who brought you the news?"

"Captain Aristófanes."

"Let us conclude! Tell him to come immediately."

"Immediately, my general."

"CAPTAIN ARISTÓFANES!"

"Present, my general!"

"How many crows did Private Pantaleón throw up?"

"One crow, my general."

"I have just learned that there were two crows, and earlier they said three."

"No, my general; there was only one crow, fortunately; but nevertheless, saving the respectable opinion of my chief, it seems to me that one was enough to cause the case to be considered an unheard-of phenomenon. . . ."

"I think the same, captain."

"One crow, my general, is in no way remarkable, if we consider it from the zoölogical point of view. What is a crow? Let us not confuse it with the European crow, my general, which is the *Corvus corax* of Linnæus.

"The species that we know about here is included in the numerous family of the diurnal *Rapacia*, and I hold that we are dealing with a true and genuine *Sarcorhamphus*, since around the base of the bill are visible the characteristic feathers, in which respect they differ from the *Vultur papa*, from the *Cathartes*, and even from the *californianus* itself. There is a difference, however, between the learned opinions of the zoölogists regarding the word *gallinazo*."

"Captain!"

"Present, my general!"

"Are we in a class in natural history?"

"No, my general."

"Let us stick to the subject then. What about the crow that was thrown up by Private Pantaleón?"

"There is no doubt of it, my general."

"Did you see it?"

"I did not exactly see it, my general; but I learned about it through Lieutenant Pitágoras, who was a witness to the fact."

"Very well then. I wish to see Lieutenant Pitágoras at once."

"You shall be obeyed, my general!"

"LIEUTENANT PITÁGORAS!"

"Present, my general!"

"What do you know about the crow? . . ."

"Really, my general, the case is remarkable, indeed, but it has been much exaggerated."

"How so?"

"Because it was not a whole crow, that of the case in question, but of only a part of a crow. What the sick man vomited was the wing of a crow. I, naturally, was much astonished, and I hastened to report it to my captain, Aristófanes; but it seems that he did not hear me say the word "wing," and he thought that it was a whole crow; and in turn he reported the tale to my major, Epaminondas, who understood that there were two crows, and he passed the word on to Colonel Anaximandro, who thought that there were three."

"But . . . and that wing or whatever it was?"

"I did not see it; it was Sergeant Esopo. You owe the news to him."

"The devil! Let Sergeant Esopo come at once!"

"He shall come at once, my general!"

"SERGEANT ESOPO!"

"Present, my general!"

"What is the matter with Private Pantaleón?"

"He is ill, my general."

"But what is the matter with him?"

"He is upset."

"Since when?"

"Since last night, my general."

"At what hour did he vomit the wing of the crow about which they tell?"

"He has not vomited any wing, my general."

"Then, dolt of an ass, why did you spread the news that Private Pantaleón had vomited the wing of a crow?"

"With your pardon, my general, from my childhood I have known a verse that runs:

I have a little girlie
With very black eyes
And hair as black
As the wings of a crow!
I have a little girlie.

"Enough, idiot!"

"Well, my general, what happened was that when I saw my mate, who was vomiting something black, I remembered the little verse, and I said that he had vomited something 'as black as the wings of a crow.'"

"The devil!"

"That was all, my general; and from that the yarn has gone abroad."

"Withdraw immediately, addlepate!"

The brave general gave himself a blow on the forehead, saying:

"A good piece of work! I think I put five or six crows in my report, as an extraordinary campaign occurrence!"

THE PRESENT STATE OF PRIMARY INSTRUCTION IN CUBA[1]

BY

RAMÓN GUERRA

The author, an experienced educator, who is intimately acquainted with the history and development of popular instruction in Cuba during the last two decades, dwells on the present intellectual, moral and civic situation in his country, finding himself none too well satisfied with it; he then studies the condition of the public schools, showing the proportion that exists between them and the total school population, and he offers suggestions as to future needs, while, at the same time, making a plea for the interest and coöperation of all well meaning and discerning people, and especially of teachers.—THE EDITOR

THE relativity of our knowledge is a fact that has been observed from of old by well informed and sincere thinkers. Thousands of years ago, a Greek philosopher, perhaps going beyond the proper limits counseled by prudence, expressed this principle in a phrase that has found favor: "The world," he said, "is my idea of it;" and many centuries have passed since Pilate, the celebrated procurator of Judea, formulated, half cavilingly and half ironically, addressing himself to Christ, the famous question—a compendium and cypher of the skeptical and unbelieving spirit of the decadent Rome of his time—"And what is truth?"

What is truth? Here is a question that arises at every moment in our undecided minds, and that necessarily presents itself to my spirit as I begin this address; for, in order to render precise and define my attitude toward certain fundamental problems in the education of the people, I am forced to discuss, in the first place, certain particulars already treated by my illustrious and dear friend, Doctor Miguel de Carrión, in his brilliant address of last Sunday, and to maintain, in respect of certain points, opinions somewhat different from his, although as to the rest we are wholly in accord.

This difference of opinion—I hasten to make this point clear—ought not to occasion surprise. These addresses, as Doctor Soler has well said, are not given for the purpose of dogmatizing on important points of education; they have sprung from an ardent and sincere desire to present, in an elevated and unprejudiced plan, the discussion of certain of Cuba's vital problems. They are in harmony, be it understood at once, with the plan as a whole, but each lecturer follows his own independent judgment, a plan which, far from being disadvantageous, is beneficial; for the value of these addresses will depend, unquestionably, more on the controversies they arouse and provoke than on the emphatic affirmations expressed in them.

Doctor Carrión, if I have not wrongly interpreted his words, maintained the thesis that the solution of what we might call "the Cuban problem" is a question of *time;* for my part, I am of the opinion that the remedy for our ills is plainly a question of *education.* Here is a point where there exists a difference of opinion. To leave to time—that is, to the free play of the historical forces most independent of the human will—the progress of the social collectivity is, in essence, to proclaim the superiority of instinctive adaptation to conscious adaptation in social life; is to affirm the incapacity of the intelligence and the will to trace for the nations the route of their destiny; and is, finally, to maintain the old political theory of "letting be done," abandoned at present by all the governments that march at the head of civilization. Such a doctrine involves implicitly a belief in an historical fatalism, inadmissible to me, as well as a renunciation of the creative and productive activi-

[1]An address delivered before the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País of Habana, May 13, 1921, the second of the series organized by the Asociación Pedagógica Universitaria.

ties of thought and action, in order to let the hours weave on in silence, beyond where our endeavor reaches the marvelous warp of our own history.

I think I am not a dreamer—pardon me the immodesty—one that nourishes his mind on vain mirages. I recognize the limitations of the human intelligence and will in the presence of the immeasurable forces of the physical world; but I can not fail to recognize also that the superior man, armed with culture, never surrenders his spirit without a struggle, in the presence of the brutal dominion of the blind forces of nature that dominate the life of the lower organisms. Intelligence and will are also natural—cosmic, we might say—energies of an immense power. Appearing at a very advanced stage of the world's existence, they constitute a higher means of adaptation, an adaptation of their own—but only of man, perhaps—that is, *conscious adaptation.*

Inferior beings, with no other guide than instinct, let themselves be borne along in the current of time; but man, endowed with an intelligence that foresees, anticipates the future and in part he molds and fashions it according to his will. Ancient Chronos is no longer the acknowledged lord and master of human destinies: intelligence shares with him the possession of the morrow.

Perhaps this difference of opinion in virtue of which we confide, some in time, others in education, may not be, in the absolute sense, so complete as appears at first sight. As for myself, I hold that Doctor Carrión, an intellectual of the first quality, will not deny to intelligence its extraordinary power to influence the lives of peoples. I think, rather, that his thesis is limited to the Cuban people, inasmuch as he considers it an imperfect social conglomerate, in view of the peculiar qualities of its constitution, just as they were analyzed by my distinguished friend with all the elegance and depth characteristic of his sterling talent.

However, it happens that another point of divergence arises here. The opinion at which I have arrived regarding the Cuban people, according to my observation of the facts of its social evolution during these later years, differs from that of my friend in certain respects, and I ought to hasten to make it clear here that I do not call attention to this from a mere desire to harmonize my very modest opinion with his authoritative one; but because a certain profession of prior faith—let us call thus—is indispensable to the development of my subsequent thesis. Doctor Carrión takes a pessimistic, or, I might say with greater propriety, an almost pessimistic, view of our history during the last twenty years; I think otherwise, honestly and truly.

Perhaps the difference in opinion is due at bottom to that principle of the relativity of knowledge to which I have already referred; or perchance it may all be the effect "of the glass through which we see," as the poet said. Doctor Carrión is a notable physician, a celebrated novelist and an eminent journalist of the militant type. He has found it necessary to come into contact repeatedly, in the exercise of his profession, with the diseased and lacerated part of the human organism; he has had to search into the innermost depths of the souls of the personages of his novels, in whom he has seen germinate in their most naked, primitive and gross form the base appetites of our state, free of the masks that are cast over them by social conventionalism; and finally, to his editorial table has come day after day naked information, bereft of every palliating artifice, of the concupiscences of every kind of our public life. Through this dark glass everything appears to him turbid and somber.

I, for my part, must say this, as an explanation, and not because I think it will make any difference to any one, that I have seen through a different kind of glass. A teacher, with perhaps something of the poet at bottom, in my modest and laborious life, I have always been neighbor with men subject to the hard law of work, the crucible in which are purified and chastened the human soul and the base matter; I have received inspiration from teachers, a social class that cultivates high and noble ideals in the republic; I have lived with adolescence and youth, before what we call, with elegant euphemism, "the bitter realities of life" have clouded their intelligence and muddied the pure

fountain of sentiment; and, finally, I have spent my youth among children, in whose candidly open eyes shines the contagious splendor of an ingenuous optimism, nurtured by the warmth of maternal care and affection. However, the difference of vision is perhaps not to be explained merely by the difference in the glass. I greatly fear—and I should much lament that it were so—that my superficial spirit does no more than touch the outside of things, while the scalpel of my illustrious friend penetrates to the heart of them; but I must declare sincerely that, in spite of my efforts to accept all his views, my conviction regarding the manner of interpreting the processes of our history, in respect of what has occurred during the twentieth century, stands firm.

In the first place, I hold that the fierce spirit of national independence and the unbridled longing for individual liberty have not weakened in the slightest degree in the haughty and vigorous Spanish race to which the most of the Cuban people belong; nor do I believe that there has been a diminution of the love of local freedom. Although we administer our municipalities badly, the local spirit has not disappeared from Cuba. I honestly think that the existing municipal law has had a great political scope, and that in assuring the autonomy of the *ayuntamientos*,[2] it has contributed in an effective manner to the permanent peace of the country, thus suppressing the fundamental cause of civil strife among us, or, at least, reducing it considerably by depriving the executive of all interference in local affairs. It would be unjust, besides, not to recognize that although few, there exist in Cuba municipal administrations that honor the country: the administration of Ranchuelo, in Las Villas, for example, is one of them, according to the testimony of persons that are worthy of absolute credence. These facts indicate that the old municipal spirit has not died; it abides latent in the people, almost drowned, but not destroyed, by the *political class* and the social parasites of whom Doctor Carrión told us. The census of towns in which are found figures that give a bad impression provide also, in my opinion, very favorable data. Cuba, after twenty years, has doubled the number of her inhabitants; few peoples, if any, can show so rapid a growth. The social organization—the physical or organic basis of this communuity—is in a period of full integration and growth. The Cuban people show biologically the peculiar characteristics of a rich and vigorous youth; but there is still more: the population is not progressing merely in the sense that its numbers are increasing; it shows also a marked tendency to concentrate in the populous urban centers. Habana is a great city; as likewise are important cities, in respect of the number of their inhabitants, Santiago, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Cárdenas, Sagua, Camagüey, Pinar del Río, Manzanillo, Ciego de Ávila and many other towns, and it is now known that the social energy that can be exhibited by a collectivity is directly proportionate to the condensation of the population, that is, to its density. Most of the political evils of Hispanic America are not evils of race: they are characteristic of countries with a widely scattered population, and Cuba is rapidly approaching that social state in which citizens, grouped in popular centers, are inevitably compelled to elevate the civic life to a higher plane in respect of law and collective interests. Public health and customs relating to hygiene have improved extraordinarily since 1900, in spite of the neglect of sanitation during recent years. Our people are not only sounder, but they are more capable of caring for their health. The abundant Spanish immigration since 1900 has strengthened the fundamental nucleus of the Cuban nation, whose rapid progress toward unity has been interrupted only by the coming of undesirable immigrants of other races during recent years: due to a lack of foresght on the part of our government that has cost and will still cost the country dear. The proofs of sure progress are therefore numerous, and if to all the foregoing it be added—as Doctor Carrión admirably remarked—that the population has gained in culture, that women have notably bettered their position in society

[2]Corporations composed of the *alcalde* or mayor and several *concejales* or aldermen, for the administration of the civic business of cities or towns.—THE EDITOR.

and that the negro race has achieved such extraordinary progress in its instruction and its customs that the old belief in the inferiority of certain peoples in adapting themselves to the higher conditions of civilized life has been disproved, we reach the conclusion that in the realm of events that we have been analyzing pessimism lacks a reason for being. I think the Cuban people, in the full tide of progressive evolution, is multiplying rapidly, is increasing its vitality, is raising its standard of living, is attaining to national unity and is increasing in culture. Why then be pessimistic?

The statistics of production confirm the conclusions I have just enumerated. The legend that the enormous productiveness of Cuba is due to the extraordinary fertility of the soil and to the favorable condition of the climate is lacking in foundation, and it ought to be destroyed. The wealth of Cuba is not the product of a prodigal and generous nature, but of energetic and tenacious human effort. The territorial extent of Cuba is small; a large part of her level lands is swampy, unfitted for cultivation; argilaceous savannas of slight fertility abound; serpentine lands, almost sterile, occupy extensive areas; virgin lands almost do not exist; red soil, exhausted by cultivation, is very extensive. Nor is the climate favorable, either: the temperature is too high, the rains are irregular, the light is too great for the cultivation of grains—the basis of human sustenance—and of forage, without which cattle can not prosper with certainty. Sanitation is not maintained, except by a constant struggle against the agents that produce the contagious diseases characteristic of tropical countries.

The subsoil is poor; there are no precious metals; and there is lack of fuel—coal or petroleum—a fundamental factor in the industries. The only positive advantages of Cuba are, in truth, the ample extent of her coasts and her admirable geographical situation. Nevertheless, in spite of her limited area and the slightly favorable conditions of her geographical environment, Cuba, with a population of 3,000,000 inhabitants, has a foreign commerce, both of imports and exports, greater than that of all the other Antilles, Central America and México combined. The statistical data that appear in the last *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, for the current month of May, demonstrate it. Cuba produces more than Brazil—which is as large as Europe, with a population of 20,000,000,[3] and her foreign commerce is greater than that of all the countries of South America combined, excepting Brazil and Argentina.

What do these facts teach? They eloquently proclaim that Cuba is a hard-working community, the most laborious in America, one of the most laborious of the world. It is the persistent, indefatigable labor of the Cuban agriculturist that is the foundation of our production; not an exceptionally generous nature. I say, the efforts of the Cuban, because ninety-six per cent. of our production, according to the data of the Secretaría de Hacienda, is purely agricultural, and the census informs us that the foreign population is gathered in the cities for trade, and that the natives are those who, in an overwhelming proportion, inhabit the fields and find lucrative occupation in them. The legend of our laziness is to-day an historical calumny; the virtue of work prevails among our people.

It is true that the Cuban, the producer of wealth, does not possess it, save in a very small part; but the chief responsibility for this, since the proclamation of the republic, rests on the *political class*, about which Doctor Carrión spoke to us with so much discernment, and which, instead of contributing to the collective welfare, has had an eye to enriching itself in any manner whatsoever, thus disorganizing the public service and subjecting the nation to grave danger. Entire branches of administration have sometimes been turned into private industries, into great *colonies*, and the laborious civil classes have been dispossessed, in their struggle with foreign competition and capital, of the immense advantage that might have been conferred upon them by the possession of political power.

[3]According to the estimates of the Brazilian government, the population of Brazil is in excess of 28,000,000. —THE EDITOR.

In short, to the calm and impartial eye of the sociologist our nation appears to be a vigorous social body, in the full period of growth, wholesome and laborious. The Cuban, besides, has renounced his old somewhat bohemian and apathetic spirit; to-day he is a man of practicality, enterprise and ambition, qualities distinctive of the *self-made man.*[4]

This analysis will be assailed, doubtless, as excessively optimistic. I deem it in harmony with the reality, however; and if I should be asked, on this account, what then are the true causes of our backslidings and of the sharp crises through which our country has passed, I should say, without hesitation, that the national deficit lies in the lack of organization, in the lack of culture, in the incomplete or imperfect cultivation of certain lofty qualities of the spirit. The Cuban of to-day—strong, active and ambitious—what does he lack? In my judgment, he lacks, on the one hand, the spirit of organization and technical efficiency; and on the other, *nobleness in his ambitions.* We are—in almost all the realms of complex and special activities of modern industrial civilization—improvised inexperts, lacking in the spirit of coöperation; and, in the realm of personal aspirations, we are vulgar self-seekers.

Many—it would be unjust to say all—of our men of action and thought, the natural leaders of the collectivity, are typical representatives of daring, without the restraint of culture, or persons that prefer an automobile to a reputation. Lack of organization and preparation, grossness of appetites; lack of individual efficiency and the higher discipline of character, which are the products of culture; want, in general, of noble ambitions: behold, the fundamental cause of our ills.

These very grave collective defects are not always, fortunately—I hasten to say it—proofs of depravity, although they might conduce to it; nor are they signs of decadence, although they may define it; they are characteristic too—and this I believe to be our case—of young and robust peoples that attain suddenly to a higher social state. They are enormous evils, but they are not irreparable; and the remedy for them must be found in the rapid and energetic action of education, the great instrument of conscious adaptation of peoples that are the masters of their own fate.

Such is my personal view of the Cuban problem. For what it is worth, I set it forth fully, because it is the position I assume when I proclaim the urgent need of an improvement of our system of national education. For this reason, my address, although it will be necessary to point out in it fundamental defects in our primary instruction, may not be considered an act of pessimism or negation, but, rather, an act of faith, of *Cuban affirmation.*

I occupy this platform because I believe in the collective ability of the Cuban people to comprehend what their own fundamental interests are; because I believe in the rectitude of their moral conscience, which is capable of discerning between good and evil and of deciding in favor of what is right; because I believe in the energy of the Cuban will to solve with rectitude the national problems, of whatsoever kind they may be.

I come here then, not to point out the lamentable defects of our instruction for the vulgar and futile pleasure of defaming my own people or of hurling accusations—more fruitless still—against those that may seem personally responsible for the present ills: my purpose is lofty and noble, and it is addressed to preventing the continued existence of evils that may be speedily remedied—this hope I entertain—when public opinion shall become acquainted with them in all their verity. In proceeding thus, I am trying to be faithful—and I think I am faithful—to the glorious traditions of the great educators of Cuba, whose teachings I seek to follow, as far as my modest faculties shall enable me to do. Father Caballero, Varela, Saco, Luz, Varona were not men that kept silent regarding the evils of their people through fear, in order to remain in public office or from a desire to do so, or from a false conception of patriotism. They looked the truth squarely in the face and uttered it without disguise, being thoroughly convinced, as Luz y Caballero would say, that "only

[4]English in the original.—THE EDITOR.

the truth will place upon us the manly toga," an aphorism that was not for these patriots a phrase of rhetoric, but a constant standard of conduct and an invariable principle of action.

Bringing now this long exposition of principles to a close, the time has come to sketch, even if in large outline, the present state of primary instruction, the principle object of this lecture, although almost relegated to a secondary part. Our public school, totally reorganized—almost created we might say—in 1900, is not to-day in a condition fully to discharge the social function that belongs to it in connection with our republican institutions, nor to serve, with all the efficacy required, the interests of the Cuban people in respect of the elementary instruction of the young. In the first place, primary instruction has not yet attained the degree of diffusion necessary to the total elimination of illiteracy; in the second place, it has not acquired the thoroughness that is demanded by the elementary culture of the pupil in relation to the high duties of citizenship in a democracy; and, finally, it is not adequate to the national needs in respect of work and productiveness: factors on which public welfare will depend in the period of keen universal competition that began with the termination of the war.

That our system of public schools has not been properly extended is very easy to demonstrate. According to the census taken in 1919, Cuba had a population of obligatory school age, that is, of from six to fourteen years of age, which exceeded 723,756. In all the enlightened countries the proper age for primary instruction, although not obligatory, is placed at from five to seventeen years; in such an event, Cuba had, according to the census, more than a million children of elementary school age: a colossal figure, in relation to the extent of our territory; a very handsome figure that is an augury of the perennial character of the Cuban nation; but a figure which, compared with the school attendance, plunges us in deep and sorrowful misgivings. For the instruction of these 723,756 children—if we confine ourselves to those of from six to fourteen years—for these million—if we include all those of school age—the republic had only, according to the last official statistics, 5700 schools: one school for every 126 children of those obliged by the constitution to attend school; one school for every 175 children of elementary school age. This number of schools is ridiculously small. Cuba needs at least 15,000 schools to care effectively for her population, even including the assistance of the private schools and in view of the impossibility of carrying instruction to certain remote and isolated places. This figure of 15,000 schools may seem to be exaggerated, but why is it so, if the army rose to 18,000 men, and if Cuba inscribed proudly on the program of the republic "More Teachers than Soldiers?" The United States, whose permanent army is 150,00 men, has 650,000 teachers. Why should not Cuba learn and follow in this respect the lessons of democracy?

The scarcity of school buildings—in less proportion to-day than in 1900, because we then had 3600 schools, with 1,500,000 inhabitants, and to-day, with 3,000,000 inhabitants, we have, not 7200 schools, but 5700, that is, 1500 schools less, proportionately—causes low registration in the primary schools. It is difficult at present to obtain authentic official data for an article of this kind; but the last that we have succeeded in obtaining, those of the school year of 1919–1920, give a total matriculation of 291,648 children of all ages. These figures, in comparison with 723,756 children of obligatory school age, inform us that 432,108 children of from six to fourteen years of age are not registered in the public schools. In comparison with the 1,000,000 persons of an age to receive primary instruction, we have 708,352 children and adolescents that are not official pupils of public schools, although capable of being such.

It is not that in citing these startling figures, I venture the affirmation that the 432,108 children, obliged by the constitution to matriculate, and that have not not done so, do not receive instruction. I am not so blind as not to have taken into account the development of private schools, stimulated and fostered by the enrichment of the country and the

lack of public schools. It is probable, perhaps, that 100,000 or more of these children receive instruction; but the rest—more than 250,000—do not receive it; and it is an incontrovertible fact that the public school is not to-day giving instruction to a minority—forty per cent. approximately—of the Cuban children. Can a Cuban—father or teacher—feel satisfied with this very painful situation?

Don Tomás Estrada Palma, in one of his first messages to the congress, after making it clear that the investment of the public funds is the real proof of the tendency of a government, mentioned the fact that, in the bill of national budgets that he was submitting to the congress, twenty-five per cent. of the income was devoted to instruction. The first president of Cuba continued the pedagogical policy of General Wood, a policy that we abandoned later, and to which it is necessary to return without delay, if we desire to strengthen the republic and secure the well-being of our children.

The somber picture of the lack of a sufficient number of schools and of a low matriculation becomes still darker if we consider the attendance of the children at the schools, reduced during the school year of 1919-1920 to 167,589 children of all ages: a distressing figure that informs us that only twenty-one out of every hundred children that ought to attend, do go to school. It may be thought that I exaggerate, perhaps; it may be held that I intentionally render the picture too somber; but let it be believed with sincerity that any one that can cause me to see that these figures are incorrect and that the situation is not so grave as they proclaim will bring great consolation to my Cuban heart.

The lack of schools, the lowness of the matriculation and the smallness of the attendance being demonstrated, it is none the less painful to make it evident that the effectiveness of instruction—owing to a multitude of reasons, into the analysis of which it is imposible to enter now—is so slight that the most of the pupils leave school without having mastered half the courses of study. The distressing calculation has been made in different ways, and all yield the same result: the proportion of children in the lower grades is three times as great as it ought to be; most of the children do not continue their studies beyond the fourth grade, of the eight grades that constitute the primary school.

Well then, ladies and gentlemen: the nations of higher civilization unanimously recognize to-day that primary instruction is not sufficient to prepare the young, considered as citizens and workers, for the exigencies of life in modern democracies. France, England, Germany and other countries in Europe, and the United States in America, are reorganizing with feverish activity their systems of instruction; they make teaching obligatory to the sixteenth or eighteenth year; and they complement primary teaching with semi-professional instruction, which is indispensable to the practice of the various trades and occupations of commerce, industry and agriculture. These peoples are thus preparing themselves for work, while we, thrust into the vortex of modern life and world competition, confine ourselves almost entirely to teaching a part of our youth to read moderately well. Our responsibility in this respect is tremendous. Doctor Carrión pointed out, with his keen observation of the reality, that the foreign laborer is, in all the trades, much better prepared than the Cuban, and in a position to compete with him. Vocational training is not a duty that is binding on the primary school, it is true; but if we do not lay the foundation, if we do not rapidly raise the level of our primary instruction, Cuba will not be able to have efficient workmen—in the broadest sense of the term—in any realm of human activity. The instruction imparted is not only but slightly thorough in respect of the amount of knowledge imparted to the children; it also suffers from the defect of subjecting the faculties of the pupil to inadequate discipline, thus leaving inactive his powers of personal observation, reflection and initiative. The school of the colony was "bookish," and it based on the dry work of the memory all the instruction of the pupil. In 1900 we replaced the cold and rigid written word of the text by the living, warm and persuasive spoken word of the teacher: the word that suggests, that evokes, that ac-

comodates itself to the mind of the child, that quickens his intelligence and fosters sympathy. This change, which produced a profound alteration in methods, signified, at the time in which it was established, an immense progress in the technic of teaching. Pedagogical investigation, however, achieves every day victories of higher value, and to-day it is beyond all doubt that the great instrument of teaching and education is not the word, but work. Instruction does not begin with the ignorance of the pupil, but with the knowledge and experience of the child: an experience that does not spring from what he hears, but from what he does and what he practises. Children, consequently, ought not to go to school to listen, but to work, to experiment, to do. These innovating currents of pedagogy have not yet penetrated the larger number of our schools. One of the most urgent necessities of the hour is the transformation of the pedagogical technic of our schools. This transformation ought to be complete, and it ought to begin—I say it without the least hesitation—with the normal schools, where prevails, as in the primary schools, a sterilizing verbalism in many studies. The teachers of the nation, during the twenty years of our independent life, have had under their control the two most important items, perhaps, in the accounts of the republic: they have taught the most of the people to read, thus opening an immense field of opportunities to every Cuban; and they have inculcated love for the nation. These are two great and indisputable claims on the respect of the public and on the favorable judgment of history; but the teaching profession has before it another task no less worthy or glorious: it is necessary to cultivate in other Cubans the qualities and aptitudes that make a man observing, thoughtful, the master of himself, an enthusiast for creative activity and for ennobling work.

Cuba must be educated, not as a nation of gabblers, but as a hard-working democracy. The teachers, who inculcated in the young a love for the patria, ought to teach them how to build up the sense of nationality, by strengthening and fixing habits of self-control, love for work, reflection and perseverance, by their methods and their examples.

Nor is our primary instruction worthy of a favorable opinion, because of its adequacy to the particular necessities of the social classes it seeks to serve. Our schools are barely meeting the needs of the people, particularly in the rural districts. The urban school, although in an incomplete manner, better fulfils its function of training childhood and youth for life; but our rural school is accomplishing wretched work.

The rural population is, par excellence, the Cuban productive class; it receives less aid from the state than that of the city; it has less opportunities for education and progress. The rural school has serious duties to perform in the solitude of our country regions: upon it rests the enormous task of teaching the countryman to read, of inculcating in him habits of hygiene and of instructing him in the duties of citizenship; of imparting the rudiments of numbers and of the basic science of agriculture; and of carrying to his tedious, solitary and monotonous life an element of spiritual well-being, of wholesome joy and comfort, of a love for life; for "man does not live by bread alone:" a profound truth, which at times we seem to overlook. This school upon which devolve such arduous and serious duties: what is it? In whose hands is it? It is a rudiment of a school, a germ, an institution incapable of accomplishing what the nation needs to have done; and it is in the hands of school-mistresses, young women of the cities, almost all, for whom I feel a deep respect and a very sincere admiration, for their unselfishness, their spirit of self-sacrifice and their courage; but in whom it is impossible for me to recognize at present the training required for the discharge of duties that are in opposition to their tastes, their general education, their professional training, and their deepest, their liveliest and their most profound aspiration.

It is impossible in an paper of this kind to enter into details that would carry us too far afield; I also think it unnecessary to insist on the point. Only a total ignorance of our social and educational problems, only the most unqualifiable shiftless-

ness and moral indifference can retard the fundamental reforms required, with the greatest urgency, by the country school, upon which rests with an enormous weight all the fabric of the republic.

If our primary instruction has not attained the necessary degree of dissemination; if it does not possess the required thoroughness; if its methods are not absolutely appropriate; if the character of its teachings does not meet, at least in so far as may be binding upon the rural school, the exigencies of our situation, the program of improvements that ought to be made is very easy to create.

The nation must multiply the schools; it must distribute them according to the census of school population; it must install them adequately in decent and appropriate buildings; and it must make the children attend them: a simple program to outline, but one that requires for its execution a steady and tenacious labor of good administration for many years.

On the other hand, it is necessary to improve the quality of the teaching profession, without which schools are impossible. It is necessary to bring it up to date in respect of the new tendencies of teaching; it is necessary to stimulate it, encourage it, revive in it the ardent enthusiasm of Frye's[5] times. It is necessary to secure its training and formation in a proper number, according to the requirements of pedagogy, not according to antiquated and wretched methods, the source of corruption and of favoritism. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to broaden the sphere of action of the normal schools, to reorganize these institutions and to diversify their teachings, as well as to relate them with the primary school by the strong ties of companionship, mutual service and consecration to the same great national undertaking.

Finally, it is necessary to turn our eyes upon the rural school and transform it in such a manner that it may lend itself efficiently to the preparation of the countryman, in order to open his mind to the light, raise the level of his life and enable him to discern and aspire to, in the new life, another solution of the problem of his poverty than that of the lottery ticket, and another source of emotion than that of the cock-fight.

This is, in its triple aspect, a serious undertaking that the republic has before her and that she ought to attack without delay. I have sketched it as I perceive it, without exaggerating or minimizing its gravity. It is not a task that can be accomplished by one man or by a group of men; it is one that requires the energy and the coöperation of the nation as a whole; hence this appeal to public opinion, the great directive force of free peoples.

On every citizen devolves a duty in the great task of lifting the public schools to the height necessary to the security and the dignity of the country; but the obligation falls directly upon the cultured class, the superintendents of instruction and the teachers. Ours is the greater responsibility; let us know how to discharge it with honor. To be lukewarm, to shilly-shally, to leave it to others, to take refuge behind a bad example, to keep silent when we ought to speak, to sacrifice duty to the fear of criticism, to make of one's office, chair or teachership a sinecure, are acts of cowardice and disloyalty, blemishes of character that are sufficient to disqualify the functionary and the educator.

The hour of the teacher and of the true patriot is not that of abundance, victory and peace; their opportunity comes in the trying days of sacrifice, strife and work. It is then that both jointly owe to their people a precept and an example. This truth will never be understood by men of petty and selfish natures, nor by those of low and ignoble ambitions; but I am certain that it is what is felt and practised by men of heart and by the teachers of my country, to whom I address myself in the first place.

The problems of Cuba, and particularly those that relate to education, are serious, but not hopeless. The nation possesses intellectual and moral energy; she has resources sufficient for the solution of them; and she will assuredly solve them, if, instead of shrinking before the magnitude of the effort, we set ourselves to the

[5]Alexis E. Frye, superintendent of schools in Cuba under the administration of General Leonard Wood.—THE EDITOR.

patient and tenacious labor that is a guaranty of success. As always occurs in every great crisis of a people's existence, the present moment is not an occasion that calls for great spectacular deeds; it is, rather, a moment that seems obscure and difficult, in which it is necessary that each one should fulfil his duty, his whole and simple duty, the duty of every hour and of every day. It is not enthusiastic and frantic heroism that can save us, but intelligent tenacity, coöperation and what the North American people call, with an expressive phrase, "the spirit of service," and which is nothing more than solidarity in action.

Therefore we, the organizers of this course of lectures, ask: of the new government that has assumed the direction of public affairs amid the hope and expectation of the people a definite and consistent pedagogical policy, one that shall be adequate to our needs; of the cultivated class and the laboring class, support of these efforts in behalf of collective betterment; of teachers, the nerve of every undertaking that looks to the national welfare and progress, that they strive to place themselves at the height of their new responsibilities and arduous duties; of all, finally, a little charity toward the children of Cuba: a charity translated in an effort to give them an education that shall mean health and vigor for the body, light for the understanding, energy for the will, and elevation and beauty and faith for the sentiment.

JUANA DE IBARBOUROU

THE POET OF *LAS LENGUAS DE DIAMANTE*

BY

VICENTE A. SALAVERRI

A journalist's account of a young Uruguayan poet, new to the world of letters, with some description of her verse.—THE EDITOR.

"ANTÓN MARTÍN SAAVEDRA?"

"Your servant."

"I desire to leave with you some verses."

"Are they for publication?"

"No; I should like you to give me your opinion merely."

She then handed me some manuscript. It is needless to say with what misgivings I unfolded it. Not often does a woman of talent come to a newspaper office, just so, without any recommendation.

"And why have you thought of me?" I said to her.

"Because I was impelled by the campaign you are carrying on in favor of new writers."

"And if I find that your compositions are worthy of publication?"

"I leave everything entirely to you, señor."

Doctor Rodolfo Mazzera, at present the minister of public instruction, was then at the head of *La Razón* of Montevideo. I was in charge of the technical part. Great was my astonishment when, a few hours after the interview, I read the verses. That señora—she was accompanied by her little son—of whose name I was ignorant, for she used the pseudonym "Jeanette de Ibar," was really a poet.

In her sonnets I found something more than rimed lines. They were all light and perfume and sprightliness. . . . Three or four days later I offered them to the Uruguayan public as the revelation of an extraordinary talent. There were not two opinions. Everybody was asking: "Who is Jeanette de Ibar?"

Contrary to what was to be expected of a beginner, this Uruguayan poet did not show any impatience. She published very little. It was necessary to make a great effort to get her compositions from her. "I prefer to offer them all together, in a book," she objected.

Nevertheless, the book was in the way of never being published, until Manuel Gálvez, to whom Juana de Ibarbourou sent, at my suggestion, a good number of originals, offered it a place in a series of the edition of the "Cooperativa Buenos Aires." Thus came to be published *Las lenguas de diamante*, a work that has given an enduring place to one that has excelled in many ways.

When the book became known, interest was awakened in learning something about its author, who is a very unpretentious lady and one that is even ingenuous to the point of candor in her manner; and the curious had to do with a mind so modest, so retiring and so honorable that no ground was left for gossip. Juana de Ibarbourou is young, attractive and pretty. She is as assiduous as the elves would be, in case they were set the task of taking care of a home. Without forgetting her sacred duties, while she is putting her house in order, she makes verses mentally, and until she has them wrought out in her mind she does not transfer them to paper. Her most profitable hours for dreaming are those in which she is seated before her frame. Then, while her hands are engaged in weaving, her imagination is soaring. From laces of linen she fashions the golden fabric of a poem.

From everywhere now come to Juana de Ibarbourou favorable opinions. The impression that she has made so quickly in her own country is without parallel among intellectuals. The merit of the poet has just received the seal of Julio

Cejador, Miguel de Unamuno and Armando Donoso, among many other critics of talent.

Indeed, when I saw the señora de Ibarbourou, two years ago, for the first time, I could not have believed possible a triumph so unanimous and so noisy. In the intellectual family few works have been received with greater interest than *Las lenguas de diamante.* In spite of certain verbal inaccuracies, this volume is worthy of the success it has attained, because from it shines forth a marvelous spirit of a woman. It is a sensual and a chaste book, one of stupendous evocative power. When I think that I was the first to call the attention of the indifferent reader to the merits of this poet, I experience the fatuous and generous voluptuousness of a discoverer; because Juana de Ibarbourou ranks to-day among the best women poets of the Spanish language. In America, only two women may be given a place beside her: Alfonsina Storni and Gabriela Mistral,[1] and, among those that have disappeared, Delmira Augustini, to whom she sustains a certain likeness, but whom she surpasses in femininity. As Juana de Ibarbourou's verses are glowing, they are wholesomely pantheistic; they are chaste, as another notable poet of Uruguay, an admirer of her talent, Emilio Frugoni, was able to show. They possess that peculiar flavor that seems to come from certain pages of the Bible. After excelling in the sonnet—a form in which so many good poets fail—Juana de Ibarbourou has turned to free verse, whose difficulties have been set forth by Moratín. One of her most suggestive productions is the following poem, which the author submits, in order that our readers may have a foretaste:

COMO LA PRIMAVERA

Como un ala negra, tendí mis cabellos
Sobre tus rodillas.
Cerrando los ojos, su olor aspiraste
Diciéndome luego:
—¿Duermes sobre piedras cubiertas de musgo?
¿Con ramas de sauces te atas las trenzas?
¿Tu almohada es de trébol? ¿Las tienes tan negras
Porque acaso en ellas exprimiste un zumo
Retinto y espeso de moras silvestres? . . .
¿Qué fresca y extraña fragancia te envuelve?
Hueles a arroyuelos, a tierras y a selvas;
¿Qué perfumes usas?—Y riendo, te dije:
—¡Ninguno, ninguno!
Te amo y soy joven: huele a primavera.
Este olor que sientes es de carne firme;
De mejillas claras y de sangre nueva.
Te quiero y soy joven; por eso es que tengo
Las mismas fragancias que la primavera.[2]

LIKE THE SPRINGTIME

[2]Like a black wing, did I spread out my hair
Over thy knees.
Closing thine eyes, thou didst breathe in its perfume
Saying to me the whiles:
"Art wont to sleep on moss-covered stones?
With twigs of willow dost bind thy tresses?
Is thy pillow of clover? Are thy locks so black
Because mayhap into them thou has pressed the juice,
Dark and thick, of the woodsy blackberries?
What fresh, strange fragrance enfolds thee?
Thou smellest of brooklets, of the earth and of forests.
What perfume dost thou use?" And smiling, I said
"Not any! Not any! . . .
I love thee and I am young: 'tis the smell of springtime.
This odor thou notest is that of firm flesh.
Of clear cheeks and new blood.
I love thee and I am young; hence it is I have
The same fragrance as the springtime.—THE EDITOR.

[1]See INTER-AMERICA for August, 1921, page 363, for prose poems by her, entitled "Poems of the Mother;" and page 336 for biographical data regarding her.—THE EDITOR.

FROM THE DIARY OF MY FRIEND

BY

ENRIQUE HERRERO DUCLOUX

Musings of a thoughtful man in the presence of the social and intellectual tendencies of the day. Those that have read the dramatic sketch entitled *The Straight Line* by the same author, and published in the October, 1920, number of INTER-AMERICA, will be prepared to appreciate his serious intent and his sprightly style.—THE EDITOR.

MEN AND MEDALS

I LEARNED yesterday that Zeda has denied me all merit, and that he holds me to be a fool and even an ass.

I do not deny that I have felt the prick: that would be physiological; nor do I affirm that I have accepted his judgment without protest: this would be instinctive.

However, I calmed my spirit very soon by plunging into this brief soliloquy:

"Medals of silver attain a greater value in proportion as time darkens them for us; sulphurated gases are the agents of this slow ennoblement; the most contemptible substances are the generators of these gases. Well then: we are medals of silver, which, thanks to our enemies, acquire the patina of nobility; and it is only just to be grateful to their voluntary vilification, which enables them to engender the emanations that ennoble us."

PERSPECTIVE

"THEY have appointed X to represent the nation in the international conference of Sofiburgo."

"I think he is incapable of such a task."

"Nevertheless, he is at the head of an institution for scientfic investigation, and he is a professor in a university."

"Do not forget that before coming here he knew nothing and that since then he has done no studying."

"But. . . ."

"Do not insist. I understand your error. It is an effect of perspective; it is the height at which what deceives you to-day is to be found. More than once, at night, I have taken a Chinese lantern for a star; a lightning-bug for a meteor; and above the horizon, at close of day, I have thought I saw, rising from a hillock, the profile of a gigantic centaur, in the humble *peón* of the *estancia*."

"You exaggerate."

"Look: the sun that is shooting its oblique arrows through the trees has changed the cloud that is raised on the highway by the coalman's cart into a whirlwind of gold dust: a few drops of water would be sufficient to destroy the prodigy and turn it into mud."

BELLS WITHOUT CLAPPERS

"DID you know that Doctor Glocken died to-day?"

"No; but I am surprised at the news you give me, for I attended his funeral ten years ago."

"Are you jesting?"

"By no means. You know quite well how much I liked and respected him. My address, when Glocken gave up his classes, ten years ago, was a perfectly sincere hymn to his merits."

"And this ceremony that was his coronation: do you call it an interment? You are paradoxical."

"And I do not take it back; he died then, and not to-day, as a man of action and thought, his shadow lurking in a corner, like a bell without a clapper."

"Bah! According to your theory, A and B and C no longer live, and yet they exist."

"They are alive, but they do not give off any sound; and this is enough to cause them to be forgotten, or to be disdained, if any one should venture to recall them. It matters not whether these bells be of sonorous bronze, the bronze of cannon, or of struggle and labor, like the swords and

the plowshares of ancient times; it is the same with those that have been bells of wood—bells hewn from tree-trunks—wearisome rattles of the Chinese, or the tinkling bells of the lead-horse. They all drop together into the same abyss—silence—as if they had died; the artist grows old and the banker is ruined, the politician is defeated and the gambler is stripped, the athlete is beaten and the poet worn out, beauty withers and the actress becomes hoarse: all, bells of silver or crystal, of gold or bronze, of iron or wood, bells without clappers, at last, vanish from among the living in the greatest of injustices!"

"We have twisted the interpretation of the verse from the *Psalm of Life:*

Let the dead past bury its dead!

and we pay with ingratitude the sacrifices of those that have preceded us, burying the past in the shadow and in nothingness, good and evil being mingled, the former without reward and the latter without punishment."

"Then you look upon A and B and C as walking corpses?"

"Or something similar: weapons without edges, lamps without flames, wheels without teeth, bells without clappers, in this turmoil of our stirring, superficial and utilitarian life.

THE HAPPY MAN

"WHAT that is new have you found in Naranjales?"

"I do not know whether to call it new or old: I found a happy man."

"And you did not ask him for his shirt because you knew he had none, eh?"

"I did not ask him for it, although he had one, with long cuffs and a high, stiff collar."

"You say it with a certain air of sadness."

"With sadness and envy, or, if you will, with sadness for envying him it, for not being able sincerely to imitate him."

"Is he rich, is he young, is he handsome? For in truth these are the three enviable qualities that you do not possess."

"On the contrary, he is poor, he is old and he is as ugly as a black simian. Add, if you please, that he is a detestable poet, and you have the faithful likeness of the man I envy."

"With such gifts, I think his felicity is not worth two figs."

"An error, my friend: a crass and profound error. My man is the poet of Naranjales, not '*a* poet,' but '*the* poet,' by antonomasia, of the region. If there is a wedding, off to it he goes with his lyre or guitar, and he strums an epithalamium; should any one die . . . to avoid hearing it, then, before the earth covers him, he covers him with an elegy or a lachrymose and discordant poetic doggerel; if a scion is born to a powerful house, our poet is there at once beside the cradle with a halting and vulgar rime that awakens the infant, alhough he be wrapped in profound and untroubled sleep; let it be a picnic occasion, our bard drones a sylvan lay for which he might well be belayed; and, in short, he misses no occasion, he leaves no void, when he does not lovingly present his lame verses, which are Homeric . . . according to his fancy."

"That poor man is a lunatic abroad that ought to be tied up!"

"And we are the loose madmen that go around in bonds, bound by our self-criticism, which causes us to live in perpetual torment. He neither hears the mockery nor is he aware of his stupidity; and I assure you that when he goes through the streets of Naranjales, listening to his own footfalls, in his black shoes and his black frock-coat and his black top-hat and his dirty skin, bestowing here and there a distracted salutation, indifferent to the darts of the sun and the lashings of the wind and the barkings of the dogs, his eyes uplifted, seeking for some forgotten rime in Rengifo,[1] he is the king and master of the region, and he would not change places with a Cæsar."

PARASITES

WHEN I began the study of medicine —which I never concluded—my attention was called to the difficulty that

[1]Diego García Rengifo: a Spanish Jesuit, born in Ávila, and the author of the famous *Arte poëtica*, a work that was published under the name of his brother. —THE EDITOR.

seemed to exist in defining the term that stands at the head of these lines.

Twenty years have passed since then, and I have observed and learned and taught, without bothering myself about this definition, or about the difficulties connected with it; but to-day, reading, in the report of the sessions of our chamber of deputies, a bill that the senate is waiting impatiently to approve and the executive, benevolently, to sign, the much discussed word has come involuntarily to my lips, although not without bitterness and rage.

It was a long list, very long, interminable, of names and figures; of the names of sons and nephews and widows and sisters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, of the "servers of the country;" of figures that were the money of tariffs, taxes, work, in short, distributed, rained, poured into full hands, lavished in torrents upon the beneficiaries.

I took the trouble to analyze each of those names, as well as the amounts, seeking the reason of the privileges, and I found none, except in a very limited number of cases, which contrasted with the injustice of the mass of them: a cloud of drones, a swarm of useless people, a gang of parasites, of parasites, indeed, because they are "beings that live by the labor of others."

Without looking for it, after twenty years, I had found the coveted definition, at the cost of the public exchequer, I know not whether if for good or ill, at all events, with numerous examples that adorn it.

Rara Avis

"I HAVE had a disagreeable experience to-day that I think I shall not easily forget."

"Have you lost some money?"

"That I could forget by working."

"Have you discovered the falsity of some friend or the inconstancy of your sweetheart?"

"For a long time I have known that the squaring of the circle is an impossible problem."

"I give up trying to discover the reason of your vexation; you must tell me of it."

"I have found a man of quixotic dignity and susceptibility, and I feel something of what prostitutes must feel in the presence of a wife or a virgin maiden, and somewhat also of that which must embitter age in the presence of the triumphs of youth and beauty."

"I find you too severe with yourself."

"Do not believe it; would that I were unjust! Our environment breaks our vertexes and softens our angularities, however little we struggle, and we soon deliver ourselves, soft and smooth, to him that governs. . . . An affection for acquired riches, for positions attained, makes us easy, conciliatory, malleable, clever in adjustments and compromises; and the habit of obeying kills in us the germ of protest, gently and fatally, and we fall beaten, to suffer later, as I do to-day, in the presence of indomitable virility and energy."

SCIENCE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE

"THE prolongation of your illness," I said to Pablo, "demands that you call in a great physician to remove all doubt, Doctor Old,[2] for example."

"Even at the risk of seeming extravagant to you, I must tell you that I prefer to go to Doctor Newman."[3]

"But between the latter, who is nothing but a good boy, and Doctor Old, who is an established authority, the choice is in no way doubtful."

"And I am not in doubt: I choose Newman. He, as you say, is a good boy that esteems me, and his affection for me will be an inner light that will illuminate his judgment, giving him the courage even to confess his impotence, should it be necessary; while Doctor Old, the man of learning, does not know me, and in giving me somewhat of his intelligence, his heart will be absent.

"Do you wish for a proof of my affirmations? Then listen to the story of a consultation that Newman witnessed when he was seeking in Europe what he thought he could not find here.

"The long and scrupulous examination had concluded. One by one, enveloped in their long frock-coats and behind the

[2]English in the original.—THE EDITOR.

[3]Thus in the original.—THE EDITOR.

masks that much exercise of their profession had lent them, they abandoned the room of the invalid: they were the 'heads' of the profession, the 'aces' of the faculty.

"Led by the oldest son of the patient, they shut themselves up in the ample and sumptuous dining-room, and after some minutes, in which the 'case' was studied, and it was decided with much difference of opinion that the sick man was not very ill, the conversation became general . . . and they talked of everything and everybody, amid the smoke of their cigars, first, in low voices with the mumblings of the cell, and, afterward, in louder, as at the club or in the street.

"And those wells of science talked on for an hour—for this was demanded, if not by the illness, by the fortune of the patient—so they talked on for an hour, I repeat, when, in the frame of the door, opened suddenly, appeared the form of the oldest son, filled with consternation, and trembling, and, in an empty voice, he said:

"'My father is dead! . . .'

"There was not a quiver nor a look nor a batting of the eye on those faces; the dean arose and coldly, reposedly, and with a movement of the head that was meant for a salute and a sign of assent, answered:

'We expected as much; hence . . . we had not gone away.'"

THE FEAR OF AWAKENING

TO-MORROW there will set out for Chile three young women, who have decided to bury themselves in a convent with rigid, inflexible rules, abandoning family, wealth and the thousand adulations that their beauty and blood would have won for them.

The news—imparted yesterday by their parents—has produced the imaginable consternation and it has traveled through the upper classes of the city like the roar of a formidable cannon. The subject was spoken of to-day in Pablo's presence, and his silence contrasted with the diversity of comments and the disparity of opinions.

Some one showed surprise at his silence and asked him suddenly:

"What would you do if it was a question of a daughter of yours?"

"I consider it useless," he replied, "to philosophize over the distant morrow, because I think with La Rochefoucauld that the morrow, changed into the present, would undo my best reasonings; but, worshiping a daughter as I love my sons, if she were to say to me, 'Father, I know a philter that will give me happiness until the natural end of my life by steeping me in a subtile lethargy and opening to me the golden world of dreams, although far from thee, in my coffin, as if I were dead, in the solitude and silence of the city of oblivion: will you consent to my drinking it?' I should answer her: 'Daughter, to seek for happiness is man's lot, and to find it would be the supreme good. To know that thou art happy would mitigate the selfish pangs of thy absence; but I fear that thy philter would weaken some day, some hour, some instant, and I am terrified by the vision of thy anguish, awakening in thy shroud, without air, without light, alone, quivering for a second with the infinite horror of a lost atom, madly driving thy nails into thy flesh, which would not have known the caresses of a husband or the kisses of a son!'"

"And if, in spite of your reasoning, your daughter were to persist in the intention and go away indifferent like these three women that to-morrow abandon their homes?"

"Then," added Pablo, "perhaps I should be inspired by the terrible example of the Roman father of Virginia and should save her future suffering by freeing myself at one and the same time of the accursed vision and of life."

AN HONEST MAN

"AN HONEST man has died, do you know? and I am filled with regret, with profound sorrow."

"What was his name? Did I know him?"

"Do not ask me. Accept Honest Man as a proper noun in the same way as you accept Juan Pérez or Pedro González, although you know that there are thousands of citizens that bear these names and very few that merit the one that I propose."

"And whence comes your sadness? Was he your friend, or are you afraid that

with him the 'species' has become extinct?"

"Neither one nor the other."

"Then? . . ."

"He has died poor and. . . ."

"In no other way could he die, if he were not born rich and merited to the end the name you have given him."

"He has died poor, I repeat, and it was a protest against his poverty and his honesty, heard from his own lips, already discolored and trembling, which, without my wishing it, brings me pain."

"Ah! I understand: the spirit was weak before it freed itself from matter, after a long life of austerity and fortitude, like the string of a bow that yields to the sickle after having resisted the moth."

"Debility, faintness, an instant of doubt, what you will; but if to the presence of the frightful visions of the other world that must assault us on the border of the grave you add the supreme anguish of the prospect of hunger and want for those you abandon, how can you keep from cursing a moral conception that you have beheld falsified with impunity, a scaffolding that you took for bony structure, a shadow without body? Why should one not doubt in the presence of culpable goodness, in the face of the unconscious complicity of our environment, of the slumbering conscience of those that surround us, and even of ourselves?"

"Perhaps you are right; but are you thinking of changing your course from today?"

"No; but not because of virtue, but because of cowardice. What tortures me is not knowing the course I 'ought' to point out to those that are to come after us."

SYNTHETIC CRITICISM

PROFESSOR NASE has shown me his book, *Los pelos dorsales de las avispas* (The Dorsal Hairs of Wasps), and he asks for an honest and synthetic opinion regarding it.

"You are capable of pleasing your friend, although I fear he will not be pleased."

"I share your feelings, because it is a work constructed inversely to the pyramids, that is, with the apex in the desert and the base in the clouds; and it is a "modern book," opposed to the *Quijote*."

"Opposed to the *Quijote?* Does it, perhaps, defend the books of chivalry of the wasps?"

"It is not that. I refer to the very copious biographical notes and the interminable learned commentaries that Cervantes sought out intentionally for the purpose of varying his pages, while in this case the pages were written to justify the commentaries."

"Are there, however, general conclusions, depth of thought, beauty of style, originality of method, daring hypotheses?"

"You are very exacting. There are five hundred pages, a thousand engravings, and numerous plates. . . ."

"Plates!"

"Yes, man; separate plates; in short, a respectable volume of four thousand grams, net weight."

"Now I see clearly: it is an affair of one of those books of our times, which the severe Miguel de Unamuno has so justly and harshly criticized. Now I know what you need: Victor Hugo has written in his poem, *L'âne*, a verse that solves your problem:

Et la grenouille idée
Enfle le livre bœuf."

A DISEASE OF YOUTH

I SAW Pablo talking to his students in the laboratory, and from the expressions of their countenances I understood that the subject of the conversation was not chemistry, so I drew near to listen to it.

He was telling them, half in pain and half in irony, what it had cost him to make his way through the students that filled the halls; for none had thought it proper, out of deference, to stand aside or to suspend the song they were humming or singing.

One of those that were present, wishing to explain, without justifying, the conduct of his schoolmates, remarked to him that it was doubtless an affair of four or five ill-bred ones, who were unaware of his position as a professor. To this Pablo replied affectionately:

"Omit that of the ill-bred and multiply by a thousand or ten thousand the number you have supposed: only thus shall we be sure of the reality that is surrounding us

and crushing us in all its crudeness. Physiologically, I am not disturbed by a more or less discordant shout in my ears, or by a whistle, however, keen it may be, as I am not disturbed by an involuntary elbow-thrust in a crowd, or an indecent word in a conversation in which I have no part; but, morally, I am bitterly impressed by all that signifies inconsiderateness and lack of respect, although I myself be not the victim. Those students did not know me as a professor—let us admit it—but my aspect and my gray hairs showed them that I am a man of a certain age, like their older brothers or perhaps their fathers; and this was a sufficient claim to merit from them some deference, if their souls nurtured those sentiments that constitute the hidden sense of the word *family*, and the sacred essence of the tree *patria*. We must say it, even if it hurt us to say it and hear it: that our country may cease to be a factory and become a home, a nation and patria of truth, it is necessary to teach our young men this rule of conduct: that while a slight does not harm the *formed man*, such a man deserves from *men that are in formation* unqualified respect; because he has lived more than they, and, conqueror or conquered, to live is to suffer, and, living, he will have suffered."

JUST LIKE MEN

TO-DAY a cock got into the garden, and my dog Wolff, an untrained puppy, chased him, crushing his head and tearing him to pieces afterward.

At the moment I was commenting with my friend Pablo on the news of the death of Professor and Magistrate Richter in a distant province, which *La Nación* published among its telegrams at the same time as the decrees of the national executive that appointed a successor to the departed; and I should not have become aware of Wolff's sad feat, if it had not caused an extraordinary noise in the chicken yard.

We drew near, attracted by the noise, and we found the victim lying bleeding against the wire netting, while a swarm of chickens and ducks, indifferent to the growling of the dog, were trying to get at the grains of corn that were showing through the rents in the cock's maw.

I turned to Pablo, and, pointing to the repulsive spectacle, I said to him:

"They are barn-yard fowls, and, nevertheless, they are like wild beasts."

"No;" he replied: "like men!"

CONTRADICTIONS

I FOUND Alfredo pale and faded, and I was surprised by his aspect, so different from his habitual air of merriment and joy in living. I sought in his eyes and on his ruddy lips of a sated faun the brilliancy of his enviable vigor, without finding it; in vain did I strive to provoke the malicious smile that an equivocal word was wont to awaken at any moment.

My man was changed, aged, broken, exhausted, worn out by loss of sleep and fatigue, and he confirmed this with an eloquent laconism, because his words began with the yawn and ended with the grotesque grimace of the man that is restraining himself from weeping in the presence of an outsider.

"My dear fellow," he said to me, "you can not understand me. For four days I have not rested, I have not slept, I have not lived: my little son is ill and . . . I am not sure but we are going to lose him. . . ."

I muttered some phrases—stupid, meaningless, empty, colorless, unworthy of me—I was unable to give them even the appearance of sincerity.

Afterward we separated, he, with his heart crushed with fears and cavilings, and I, reproaching myself for my triviality, recriminating my slow brain, which was incapable of doing its part by my poor friend in a difficult moment of his life.

However, when I lost myself in the multitude that comes and goes along the Avenida de Mayo, the inner voice tried to justify itself; it said softly to me, within, deep within:

"Complain not at me; thou wouldst be unjust. The blame lies entirely at the door of my faithful memory, which, seeing Alfredo downcast and worried over the illness of his legitimate son, could not believe that he was the same one who, at no remote time, passed his days in Panta-

gruelian repasts and riotous feastings, while the obscure little daughter of his free love was dying on a shameful cot in a miserable tenement, with no other affection than that of the humble, ignorant and unknown *china*,[4] and with no other maintenance than that of public charity.

EMPTY TEMPLES

"ARE you acquainted," I asked Pablo, "with the changes that are being planned in public instruction, for the sake of economy?"

"If they were to suppress the half of what exists," he replied, "the other half would still be superfluous."

"I think you are carried away by paradox on this occasion; are you not aware that our institutions of learning are a mark of pride for us in the presence of the foreigner?"

"Yes; when he is like the North American professor, who stood enchanted before a charming bath-room in school X, without stopping to think of the unconfessable ground and reason for it; but if a foreigner visited us and wished to study us honestly and should ask us where are being fashioned the Argentines of to-morrow, there would not be lacking prompt and well-meaning functionaries that would drag him through our public schools—ample, well ventilated palaces, many of them, all admirably administered and directed—and they would be much surprised if our man were to shake his head, to indicate that he had not been understood.

"Then would come another functionary, who would inform him regarding our national colleges, the professional and special schools, all well equipped, with increasing attendance, conducted according to modern methods and taught by learned professors, and his surprise would at once increase if our foreigner should again explain that he had not been understood. Then a third functionary, as amiable as those that preceded him, would take him to visit our national universities—sumptuous, magnificent, rich in cabinets and laboratories in the European style, with bulging libraries and wise professors. The surprise of our three functionaries would reach a climax, if our visitor should tell them plainly and simply that in all this world of schools and colleges, of institutions and faculties, so worthy of admiration and praise, was not to be found what would be necessary for the molding of a people, the building up of a nation.

"He would be right, more than right, in saying this, my friend. It is that our schools polish up the illiterate, our colleges manufacture bachelors of arts and our institutes and faculties turn out professionals, but nowhere are citizens molded, nowhere are Argentines formed. The intelligence is disciplined, the will is oriented, but the heart is forgotten; men come forth isolated, imbued with individualism, without intimate bonds that unite them in a common work or without collective obligations.

"If our educational organism is not profoundly modified, we run the risk of coming to a period in which men without solidarity and without patriotism may dominate. As things are to-day, we must confess that, to the impartial mind, our institutions of learning are, in general, bodies without souls, empty temples."

THE SILENT EVIL

A GROUP of university professors, friends of Pablo's, planned a movement of protest to the academic authorities against the disease of plagiarism in scientific products, which threatens to become an epidemic.

With this object in view, praise was given to those who, at the risk of their own lives, had unmasked the traffickers in fame, and censure was meted out to the accomplice kindliness and veiled cowardice of those that had gone to the aid of the pirates of the amphitheater and the laboratory.

Some favored the idea of formal complaint; others counseled individual action; and there was not wanting one that thought every expedient was useless, because the evil was incurable.

Then Pablo, who in silence, had heard all the opinions expressed himself thus:

"Your initiative is more than necessary;

[4] Applied, in South America, to the unmarried Indian or *mestiza* girl; also used among the common people as a term of endearment.—THE EDITOR.

it is indispensable, besides being consoling as a symptom of a reaction that has been too long in coming, because we live puffed up with egoism, without measuring the consequences.

"The superficial, showy, false and empty existence, the growing complexity of our useless necessities, the epidemic of luxury and dissoluteness induced by what this complexity brings in its train, withdraws university men from the inner life and drives them to seek renown and a place and career at any price, in order to acquire wealth. Among us, honest poverty has been a stigma, and money obtained by simony and gambling has not been so; we have made a show of nobility and lineage, as if the virtues of our forefathers could serve as a shield for the vices of their descendants; the springs of character were loosened, courage being lacking to deny the hand to the successful bandit or the smile to the powerful usurper; audacity and daring have been virtues, and modesty has been counted a defect; decisions have been sought in a foppish and accommodating code of honor, while fleeing the severities of the penal code, austere and impersonal; the *unmoral* type, the one attacked by Daltonism, half good and half evil, incapable of distinguishing between colors, more incurable than a blind man, has been increasing, being propagated with impunity and in silence; and we have been sinking lower and lower, wearied with rattles and vain words, without justice in high places, and without conscience among ourselves.

"I am aware that a professor of great reputation has counseled that we keep silent about these things, that we excuse the acts as errors of young heads, and wait for time to do its work; but I think he is mistaken and that such conduct would be equivalent to falling into the silent evil of which we are told by the severe Jesuit whom in literature we called the divine Gracián:

> The judge keeps silent regarding justice; the father keeps silent and does not correct the wayward son; the preacher keeps silent and does not reproach vice; the confessor keeps silent and does not emphasize the gravity of wrongdoing; the evil man keeps silent and does not confess or mend his ways; the witness keeps silent, and crime is not discovered; all keep silent, and evil is hidden.

COLLEGE OF ORPHANS

IT HAS cost me something to open a passage in front of the Colegio Nacional of Silvertown:[5] the sidewalks were swarming with pupils, who, like buzzing bees about the entrance to the hive, were shouting and dancing around banners and standards that announced a "strike of solidarity" with the university students, who were embarked on revolution and given over to violence.

Among the rioters I have not seen a solitary man, and not, even on the *older ones*, so much as a shadow of down on the lip to create the illusion that they were not children.

I have gone my way beneath the trees, confused and pained, thinking of the absence of parents from this place and at this moment, through indifference, ignorance or perhaps accomplice complacency; and perhaps it would be well to wipe out the great letters in relief that tell the people that there stands here a national college, and change them for a sign that would cry out to all, as a reproach and a voice of alarm: "College of Orphans!"

THE BROKEN GLASS

IT WAS all the work of an instant: the rain of glass after the dull blow, the stopping of the motor-car under a creaking brake and the leaping of Pablo after the urchin, who fled breathlessly along the avenue, in the semi-obscurity of the trees. I looked at the perfect hole in the glass, whose edges sparkled with glints of distant reflections, and I was entertaining myself with the play of light on the splinters, narrowing my eyelids, when Pablo appeared, walking slowly. He said to me, without any appearance of weariness in his voice:

"I let him escape. The little devil could not have been more than eight, like my older son. . . ."

"And for this you shot away like an arrow?" I replied.

"I could not resist the instinctive im-

[5] Thus in the original.—THE EDITOR.

pulse; but when I had him within reach of my hand, and he looked at me tremblingly, I let him escape. . . ."

"To-morrow he will break another glass for you!"

"I do not know; it may be. I have not let him go, merely out of pity, but at the very moment I reflected that I was to blame, like you, like all of us, who could prevent this deviltry in our streets and who do nothing to eradicate it. It was not strange that he should have broken a glass; what is inexplicable is that there should still be so many whole glasses in their frames."

TOUT PASSE, TOUT CASSE, TOUT LASSE

"DO YOU not admire, my dear Pablo, that group of young men who, wearing crosses and medals, are arriving from Europe, bringing with them an echo of the universal war?"

"Not to admire them is impossible, and not to envy them is very difficult: they are men that make us proud to be men, although also, without showing it, they stand as a mute reproach of our absence from the great struggle."

"And not the least admirable part is in their simplicty, their complete lack of pose, their apparent ignorance of the part they have taken in the epopee."

"What I admire is their lack of concern over the passing of time."

"Do you not think they are dreaming of the future?"

"Not only do I not think so, but I am sure they are not. The extraordinary, incredible, superhuman, past still holds them, and hence they smile like the acrobat, in response to the delirious applause of the public, after a trick that might have been mortal. Not one of the returned soldiers is aware that time is passing, and each one covers, erases, submerges his achievements in so far as the public is concerned, stirred by other emotions and attracted by other spectacles; none of them remembers that his uniform is out of shape, faded, rumpled and torn; and, in short, none pays any attention, in the street-car or in the theatre, in the café or in the street, to the look of indifference that greets their silhouettes, when the enchantment of novelty has worn off, in the minds of the vulgar and selfish multitudes."

OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHY

THE minister of Panamá in Madrid has delivered a gold medal to Alfonso XIII for his humanitarian activity during the recent war, and, placing the trinket in the royal hands, he has pronounced a discourse in which all the Chinese lanterns of Hispanic-Americanism shone with the flowers of the rhetoric of etiquette.

"Nothing of all this deserves anything but praise," Pablo said to me; "because the sportsman king is worthy of the homage, and the minister is not responsible for Hispanic-Americanism and the rhetoric of etiquette; but the subject becomes complicated in the reply that the telegraph puts in the mouth of the monarch—dictated by some courtly counselor, a cultivator of florapondium—for in closing he promised the minister that he would wear the medal on his trip to Buenos Aires.

"Well then: either in the real geography Panamá and Buenos Aires are neighbors, or the Panaman medal on the breast of Alfonso XIII, disembarking in our port, would be as appropriate as the orders of the mikado or of the raja of Kapurthala.

"And as I am unwilling to suspect such general ignorance, I am inclined to believe that the position of court counselor has come to be filled by the Barcelonan journalist who, in his land, asked me if the vessel that had brought me from Buenos Aires had not touched on the way at Caracas!"

AN ANACHRONISM

THE nineteenth year of the twentieth century is approaching its close, and in the principal cities of *Cosmopolis* have appeared great posters in which the evangelical youth are invited to go to the churches to pray in order to assure the success of their approaching examinations.

My first impression was one of surprise, afterward, of pain and, finally, of protest, although these sentiments were in no way influenced by the color of my belief; for the same effect would have been produced on me by a summons to Catholic, Israelitish or Mussulman youth. It moved me to

pity that young men should intrust the success of their efforts to the intervention of the saints; and, in short, it stirs one to protest to see that there should be extended and propagated, should be impressed and rooted in the country, the idea of the futility of study and work, the uselessness of individual effort, thus closing every fountain of personal initiative and vitiating the principle of justice.

I accept, respect and admire the husbandman who, taking refuge in his belief, prays to the good God of the fields to withhold from the land where he has bestowed his hard labor of long days the hail or the drought, the flood or the plague of myriad wings; but merely as vain and imbecile should I consider one that considers a prayer sufficient to fecundate stalks in fields without furrows or seed.

Our country needs another kind of morality for our young men, one that would be more logical and less barren. Let us speak clearly, openly and even rudely in order that there may be in them the inner conviction of the necessity of effort, of the fruitfulness of labor and of the duty of upright conduct, repeating to them after the day's work, with the book of Job:

Thou shalt forget thy misery,
And remember it as waters that pass away;
And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday;
Thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

SAY IT TO ME SPINNING

WRAPPED in the *wave of laziness* that is spreading over the world; the wave of restlessness, discouragement and doubt, for some; of sadness and discouragement, for others; I feel at moments starts of euphoria, violent impulses toward reaction, against that current—silent and ascending—that threatens, as in the inundations of our plains, to cover everything, to submerge everything, to bury everything; against that tide of egoism, of venal interests at whatsoever cost, of a minimum of effort when the necessity of a maximum is evident, of dissolution and leveling, without a patriotic ideal to guide us, in a country where men, if they are not like the wheat that ripens every year and crosses the ocean, have a rootage in the surface of the ground, like the imported eucalyptus, which the least wind tears up and overthrows.

In these moments of energy, of lucidity in lethargy, of protest against the slow and continuous process of disgregation that we are witnessing, I feel that, in obedience to a secret force, I should dash through the streets and squares, speaking or preaching, without cries or heroic looks, without imprecations or abuse, with an evangelical sweetness, as if I spoke to children, giving to thought the form of parables, firing with the word, which is a spark, the flame, which is action, dropping the seed in the furrow like the wind, without turmoil, and leaving to the sun and the air and the rain the accomplishment of the prodigy of the roots and the leaves.

To begin, I should relate the forgotten history of that exalted teaching, that of the octogenarian grandmother, of the hard-working little old woman that made the spindle whirl between her tendril-like fingers, ceaselessly, treasuring the fine, twisted, snowy thread that came from the distaff, while her granddaughter, still a girl, more of a talker than a doer, let her hand lie quiet and kept her tongue going, as she repeated the gossip of the plaza and the jests of the fields, until the old woman interrupted her softly, sweetly, and with an affectionate reproach said to her:

"Good, good, now I hear you, but . . . say it to me spinning!"

Yes; "Say it to me spinning" ought to be remarked to the garrulous and noisy politician of our public squares, who ought to save his cries and his hollow eloquence, reserving his energies for the workshop of the congress, his field of labor, where he may give us the laws that the development and the outcome of the war imposed as urgent and indispensable in our country, and which we are still awaiting.

"Say it to me spinning," I should exclaim to the rebellious, anarchical and trifling laborer that abandons his productive work for unprofitable idleness, a prey to mad longings that urge him to destruction, without reflecting that the forests and mountains were not born in a day and that an enduring work is not erected on

foundations that have been shattered by dynamite. I should try to kindle in his spirit the noble idea that our generation can only enjoy the vision of the well-being of our children, and that for them we ought to sacrifice egoisms and stifle impatiences.

"Say it to me spinning," I should repeat to the capitalist, proud in his wealth as among cliffs, apathetic and inactive, a parasite in a shroud, empty of ideas and filled with appetites, who contents himself with moaning before the voices of the awakened and threatening common people, instead of shaking off his useless supineness and sowing about him important works for the redemption of souls by education and labor, and not by alms that belittle and offend.

"Say it to me spinning," I should shout to our youths, misled by deceptive mirages, plunged in revolt and violence, demolishing institutions, overthrowing respectable reputations, deserting schools and abandoning books, without pausing to consider, because of the ardor of their young blood, that the intellectual future of the republic will be startling if the sieves of selection are pierced by blows, and if an attempt be made to forge swords for combat out of vile lead, which the slightest shock will double, soften and melt.

"Say it to me spinning," I should propound to the economist, who, over the table of the café, thunders against those that administer the public exchequer, while tolerating or provoking slovenliness and disorder in his own house and property, forgetting that the welfare of the nation consists in the prosperity of all the citizens, and that on each one rests the binding obligation of complying with his duty in his sphere of action, like a soldier of a great army.

"Say it to me spinning," I should counsel professors and teachers, fashioners of intelligences and characters, and to ministers of the different faiths, who lead souls toward goodness along parallel paths, each and all presenting a shocking contradiction between their noble and elevated doctrines of labor, morality, austerity and toleration, and their own selfish and barren lives—torpid or dissipated, intransigent or cruel.

"Say it to me spinning," routine judge, thou that complainest of the defects of the laws, and dost not dare to impart to thy decisions what thy conscience dictates; and thou, military chief, that dost neglect, in the ease of the great city, the vigilance of the frontiers, justice in remote lands and the sacred task of infusing national spirit into the men of all races that duty brings beneath thy banner; and thou, avaricious merchant, conscienceless monopolist, that askest protection of the state and remainest indifferent to the penury of the laborer; and thou, bureaucrat, that dost protest against the smallness of thy salary and dost convert thyself, to thy discredit, into a treadmill donkey, although thou possessest more than enough intelligence to make thyself independent of the miserable yoke; and thou also, publicist that makest pretense of the apostleship of truth and art mute with guilty silence, when thou fearest, on account of thy interests, to attack the powerful—whether individuals or the multitude.

Finally, let us all speak, but spinning, for the invisible weaver awaits our hanks of multicolored threads in order to weave the fabric of the future for those that are to follow us after this period of transition, a bridge stretched across time between the great stages of humanity, above the roaring, turbulent, overflowing and sanguinary river of the universal war, whose echoes still thunder on the horizon like the vague and fearful notes of the pastoral symphony, when the tempest retires and the sun shines out again.

THE WITHERED TREE

THE train was running across the drear woodland, and there was nothing on which the sight could repose in that shoreless ocean of verdure, when, at a turn of the road, there appeared, closing the horizon like a cyclopean wall, a grove of gigantic eucalyptuses. They seemed to be asleep and motionless in the distance, wrapped, as they were, in a light, bluish mist, which lent greater mystery to their inner shadows; all equal in color and height, like twin brothers, they formed against the sky a lofty, glaucous wall that contrasted with the dazzling flame of the sunset; only

one of them broke the line and the color, raising its yellowish top above the rest, face to the sun, keeping vigil, perchance, over the distant river, invisible to us.

The train approached the wall of verdure with keen, piercing whistles, and soon I could admire the woodland in all its grandeur, and at the same time make out that the tall tree with erect brow was dry. Doubtless its leaves stirred beneath the wind with a sad, hollow rattle, amid the concert of the teeming foliage of the trees, doing their work beneath the rays of the sun, drunk with the blue air and the song of the birds. In the state of easy somnolence into which the monotony of the landscape had plunged me, it seemed to me that I understood and penetrated the complaint or lament of the moribund giant:

"I lived a simple and uniform life among my brothers, absorbing from the earth and the air the sap of my branches, and from the sun-god the energy of my foliage, looking toward the east and singing ceaselessly songs as soft as prayers or thrilling with age-long hymns of the forest, until the day—to me unforgettable—on which two young men, who were tramping along idly, conversing, approached me, and I heard one of them say:

"'Undeceive thyself: true life is to enjoy the present hour without thinking of the morrow, letting everything drift according to its whim, with no other preoccupation than one's own welfare.'

"'No;' replied the other, leaning against my trunk; 'that is good for the flocks we have seen in the meadow, browsing on the lush pasture. Life lived thus would lose all it possesses that is noblest and most elevating; that is, sacrifice. Ah! who among men could live like this tree, with its face to the sun, its head on high, singing beneath the wind, making the ground wholesome and purifying the air!'

"Then they went away, but these last words caused to issue from the darkness of my soul the secret of my whole life, and in my being quivered an unknown desire, so new, so intense, that I felt a mysterious thrill run from my roots to my twigs. I must work, work, without resting; I must rise aloft among my brothers, my roots toward the deep strata, my top soaring toward the clouds; and such was my effort that in a short time I attained the form I possess to-day: I am the first to salute the sun in the morning, and the last to see it die, when my brothers fall asleep in the shadow, lulled by the breezes, and the murmuring in the nests.

"Short enough was my triumph, however: the hurricane, jealous of my tallness, on a tempestuous night, hurled its howling packs and its vultures with deadly wings upon the forest, rending with lightning the branches of the trees that surrounded me, yet unable to vanquish me, until, calling to its aid a thunderbolt, the latter, raging, sought my head and tore through my body, amid the laments of the forest, whose trees wrung their creaking arms, terrified and desperate.

"The new dawn found me withered and conquered: my life was ended; but I do not repent of my effort, nor do I think my sacrifice useless . . . as long as the sun shall shine in the heavens!"

Thus did the giant tree speak to me while the train took its way toward the city indifferently, and I understood wherein consisted its recompense: the setting sun was caressing the yellowish top of the vanquished struggler, and it dyed its dead leaves with pure gold against the dark green of the woodland.

SINBAD THE SAILOR

I WAS accompanying Pablo to-day to the university, and on the road through the woodland we had to slow down the speed of the automobile, which he himself was driving, in order not to run over a crowd of students, who saluted as we passed. When we reached the bottom of the steps and left the car, Pablo paused on one of the lower steps, and, turning toward the drive on which the students were coming on foot, he said to me:

"You do not know how sad I am when I encounter students like these of to-day and I read in certain faces a vague sentiment of rancor, of silent reproach, because I, protected from the sun and the rain, can spread myself in this automobile, caricaturing the great ones of the earth,

without meaning to do so. This attitude distresses me, because those that have let this inner flash of impatient longing, of unconscious injustice, show in their eyes have always been provincial youths, boys that are beginning to strive to make a position, perhaps a name, for themselves, and they overlook the suns and the rains endured by the grain in my barns.

"There are times in which the emotion I feel is so strong that I would stop the car and at once call them about me, and, seated on the step, I would tell them my story, as did Sinbad the Sailor to the porter of the oriental tale, of my cruel journey through life, being certain that, as Sinbad afterward deemed the glory achieved to be the just reward of the magnate, so would these young men judge my present prosperity not exaggerated, as a recompense for thirty years of hard and noble struggle on the part of a man that has never had any youth."

AN AUTHORITATIVE OPINION

THE minister of public instruction of Silberland, a brilliant intellect, which, without dispute, honors our generation, has presented to the congress his plan for reforming the secondary instruction of the nation, upholding it there with spirit and tenacity against the attacks of impassioned political adversaries and the criticisms of his friends of contrary opinions.

I was sketching the situation to Pablo, expressing without stint my admiration of the illustrious orator and polemist, when he interrupted me smilingly, at the same time that he handed me a newspaper:

"Like you, I admired him until I had read this newspaper. Now I am in doubt, and I have come to believe that our idol with the golden head has feet of clay."

"Why?"

"Because to-day he solemnly receives the applause of the national union of secondary students, who are holding a noisy meeting[6] in the plaza. As I recognize among their leaders certain plucked students—reprobates, daily absentees, chronically suspended, undisciplined and useless—I can not forget that "if the wise man refrains, it is bad; and if the donkey applauds, it is worse. . . ."

A FABLE THAT IS REPEATED

WHEN Mark Twain wrote his book of travels, in which he feigned to be an ignoramus in order to utter a thousand follies, flowers of English humor, all the world applauded, and the editions of his work mounted up.

Some years later my friend Dumm went to the United States, and he related his impressions of the states visited, in letters to a daily of Silvertown, without obtaining any other comment than noisy jests and bitter criticisms.

"Be not surprised at what has happened," Pablo remarked to me; "because we have had a repetition of the fable of the imitator of the pig that was applauded and that of the real hog that was hissed."

LINEAGE

OF THE vain preoccupations that prevail in our environment and in our times, none is more inoffensive than this concern over lineage. Nevertheless, just as it may sometimes be useful, by imposing a severe discipline on him that lives under the influence of it, so too sometimes it may engender contempt for others, who are not free of blemishes.

In my task of pointing the way to young men, more than once I have had to meet this question outside the class room in order to destroy a prejudice, the propagation of which in a democracy can never be considered beneficial, from the collective point of view, even if in particular cases it may become a source of energy.

Casting aside all this aristocratic nonsense, which, in the old countries of Europe, is ridiculous, and in a republic would be ultra-comic, there still remain the claims of lineage as the refuge of our plutocracy and the supreme ambition of the middle class, which keeps its eye on it and caricatures it in everything. They would easily become convinced of their error, if they would have recourse to the study of modern eugenics, but as people with such birds nesting in their heads read little and study not at all, there is slight hope of correcting their misconceptions.

[6]English in the original.—THE EDITOR.

Our hope is in the young, and therefore one can never insist too much on showing them that the makers of all the history of humanity, those that have illuminated the way for the innumerable caravan, in science and the arts, only by exception had ancestors: all were the creators of names, the gravers of blazons, not inherited, whom we name with respect when they were eminences and were our Ameghinos and Sarmientos. The universal law is fulfilled inexorably in our land: saving rare and brilliant exceptions, the surnames with claims to lineage are disappearing in the brilliant field of science and art before the flooding tide of the obscure, the nameless; and, although not without protest, their defeat is indisputable because of their sterility and their impotence. The triumph of democratic ideas in the political world is coincident with the triumph of the physical doctrines of the unity of matter and the community of origin of all bodies; and in the field of chemistry, the epithet of *noble*, reserved for the rare gases of the atmosphere, is but slightly enviable, because they do not owe it to exalting qualities, but to their inertia, their neutrality, their absolute uselessness.

Only fools and nincompoops can base their pride, their own value, on the merits of their ancestors. The austere Jesuit, Gracián, who has taught us throughout the ages, has expressed it in lapidary phrases:

A boaster of his ancestry, much convinced of his honor, said that it came to him from long ago, from back among his ancestors, on whose deeds he was living.

This honor, my dear sir, no longer hath a good odor; it is rancid; try to find a more practical one. Little mattereth ancient grandeur, if pettiness be modern; and if thou dost not dress in the clothes of thine ancestors, because they are not in the fashion, nor goest forth on a day with the martingale of thy grandfather, because they would make fun of thee for such an outlandish performance, do not attempt, either, to deprive the mind of its honors; seek in new deeds an honor that will be according to the fashion.

This is to us an incontestable truth, and on its becoming incarnate in our men of worth, or that may become so, depends the future greatness of the patria. Nobility is, before everything, virtue; nobility is also talent and productive labor, and it is even beauty, but beauty is not complete if with the perfection of the body be not joined harmony of spirit.

Why seek ancestors in order to judge of a man? Do we appreciate a tree for its roots, when we are enjoying its shade and eating its fruit? When I hear any one enumerating his surnames with emphasis, I feel tempted to ask him, like Sudermann's personage: "And nothing else?"

Families, like trees, possess branches of very different value, and it is not their fault if the pruner respects some and despises others; noble trees make show of worm-eaten fruit, and more than once is there demand in grafting for a savage and robust strain to improve the species.

Let us venerate those that have been, rendering them our homage, and let us follow their example, but let us not live off their remains . . . like buzzards. Let us sow in our own furrow, to the sun and the wind, with effort, with weariness, and we shall rejoice at length in the harvest that will be ours and ours alone, not because of the name we have inherited, but because of the arms we lay bare. The *self-made man*[7] is the ideal type of the future Argentine; his merit is wrought by blows, by hammer-blows, like steel forged upon the anvil: it is all his. The inheritor is the colonial type, now out of fashion; his merit was cast iron . . . it is all in the mold.

COMMENTS ON A LECTURE

"AS I was not able to attend the lecture, I hope you will tell me, in outline, what was the subject discussed by Doctor Verdáez."

"Oh, it will not be very difficult. The orator emphasized the necessity of starting a crusade against evil in all its forms, whether it be a question of diseases in the organic world or of vices in the moral world; he next asserted that the *case* of our country is *hopeless*."

"I think he did wrong and that he uttered a falsehood in saying this. He did wrong because he was listened to by young

[7] English in the original.—THE EDITOR.

men in the flood-tide of activity, and he uttered a falsehood, because the 'case' may be desperate, but never hopeless."

"You think, perchance, that the evil can be abated, abolished?"

"No; but I *could* think it, and my optimism seems to me less dangerous than an absolute negation. Ideas are not true or false, but beneficial or hurtful. I hold that in the moral world prevails the principle of the conservation of energy that was immortalized by the names of Mayer and Helmholtz, and it constitutes the corner-stone of physical science. According to it 'the sum of good and evil that exists in the universe is constant.'"

"Have a care! Your words confirm my pessimism, which you were combating a moment ago."

"In the universal realm it may be so; but in our circle, in our limited and particular case, no; a thousand times, no. The mass of the seas is constant—let us admit it—and this does not prevent one port from being accessible and another from losing its water like a barrel with a hole in it, at one and the same time. So, in the domain of good and evil, happy are the peoples or the provinces or the cities or the families or the individuals, in short, that are able to secure for themselves the flood-tide of good and the ebb-tide of evil, although it be only for an instant."

"I am of your opinion. Do you believe, perchance, that a man or all humanity may succeed in altering the fixed order of things, the established law?"

"I shall reply with an example: I have a friend who, as a child, thought he had saved the life of his sick brother by killing thousands of flies; for in his ingenuous soul the equilibrium between life and death did not seem to be governed by absolute law; and so he attempted to save the cells of the diseased body by destroying, eliminating, blotting out from among the living, his ridiculous victims. Who could justly deny to that boy the right to his belief, since, in his sphere of action, it led him to a useful act, in the realm of hygiene, in the last analysis?"

"But in the struggle between good and evil, we are going to run counter to the very essence of human nature, immutable in itself, and perhaps with the same condition of existence as the universe."

"I grant you that a man is a very small affair, if he is to do battle against a whole century, but he is far from being a 'null' quantity; and in his decisiveness and his beliefs resides the power not to be changed into a 'negative' quantity."

HAITI AND THE CONFEDERATION OF THE ANTILLES[1]

BY

ANTÉNOR FIRMIN

Although written and first published some years ago, this article, because it represents a present Hispanic-American tendency of some importance, is here presented to the English reader. In addition to the discussion of the theme, it throws light on a number of interesting personages and events of the recent past. The author recognizes the many advantages that would result from a confederation of the Antilles, but he also sees, and gives due consideration to, the difficulties that have beset and will continue to beset the undertaking.—THE EDITOR.

ABOUT the year 1880, there was in Paris a distinguished group of Latin-Americans, almost all of Spanish speech. Men of culture, enthusiastic over the idea of the solidarity of the peoples of Latin origin, they cherished, above everything, devotion to political liberty, which is, in America, the powerful leaven of all the beautiful qualities and all the higher aptitudes that render man worthy proudly to bear the lofty title of lords of creation. Their dream was the intellectual and moral emancipation of all peoples whose impulses are constrained by any external force, national despotism or colonial exploitation. They aspired to establish an international bond between each of the Latin-American nations and the others with which it was associated in effort and in development.

How could it be done? Would it be by means of an absolute, constitutional confederation that should respect the national autonomy of the constituent states, that should create for all a center of direction, a capital, whose unifying action would preserve the patriotic whole, its divers material and moral interests—thus extending to them order and a reasoned progress—maintained by administrative discipline and juridical uniformity? Would it be simply by means of an amphictyonic organization whose weakest links would, nevertheless, afford a means of normal and regular contact among the youthful nations of America that belong to an ethnic type different from that of the Anglo-American? Would or could this modern amphictyony, like that of ancient Greece, have the same cohesive power as that which gave it its sacred, religious character during the historic periods of the ancient Hellenic cities? This was a vague purpose with which we barely concern ourselves.

Among these men of the élite, we must mention two names—the most illustrious and those that served as sentinels—in the meetings in which dominated the great aspirations of a world of thinkers, men of letters and savants, most of them slightly known or with a reputation far below their intrinsic worth. I refer to Torres Caicedo, a diplomat, and Doctor Betances, a physician.

Torres Caicedo was short of stature and serious; on his brow rested the ennobling sign of deep thought; he had a lively and penetrating glance; and he possessed a beautiful head adorned with carefully tended hair. His language was clear and well matured; his spirit alert; and his physiognomy, at once appealing and impressive. He was the absolute personification, so to speak, of the Hispanic America that he held in equal and constant worship. He took up his pen or lifted his voice in turn in behalf of Venezuela, México, Chile, Perú, Argentina and other South American republics,[2] with an ardor similar

[1]This article was translated from the French into Spanish for *Las Antillas* by Lino Dou. As we have not had access to the original, but have had to depend on a translation for our version, it thus being two degrees removed from the author's text, we can not vouch for its absolute faithfulness.—THE EDITOR.

[2]We have reproduced the words of the author, although we recognize, of course, that México is not a South American republic.—THE EDITOR.

to that which he always displayed in defending the land of his origin, the former Nueva Granada, to-day the Estados Unidos de Colombia. This character of an Hispanic-American patriot was sealed by the fact that Torres Caicedo had already represented—now in Paris, now in London, now in Brussels—Venezuela, Colombia and El Salvador, one after another, without losing anything of his national loyalty.

The illustrious Colombian was, at one and the same time, a distinguished diplomat, a cultured man of letters and an eminent publicist. He had published a notable work, one whose very title is characteristic of the lofty visions of his transcendent and constructive spirit: *La unión latinoamericana.* This was the leading idea that emanated from all his looks, as well as from all his words, at once well thought out and "constraining." He died in 1889, the year of the centenary of the great French revolution, the influence of which upon the development of the Latin-American nations he had sketched in a masterly way in his work entitled *Los principios de 1789 en América,* which obtained for him the enviable distinction of being named a foreign correspondent of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

The second personage of the Hispanic-American group in Paris, Doctor Betances, had the round head and radiant look of some strange suggestion of an apostle. His tousled hair fell in disorderly locks over his prophet and thinker's forehead. His roundheadedness was impressive. He had the air of a fighter, which contrasted with the sweetness of his ever smiling physiognomy. He felt great indignation at sight of any base or unjust act; but he never experienced the nervous debilitation or excitement of rage. In all that he said could be felt an ardor of conviction and a soul of sincerity that made their way to the heart and reached the conscience. From all his person, in short, there seemed to emanate an irresistible magnetic fluid that attracted the temperaments of even those that were most refractory to magnetic influences.

Let us imagine a Voltaire, with the traits and attitude of a San Vicente de Paúl! A spirit hungering for justice and liberty, he united with an insatiable desire to improve the lot of the disinherited, free thought touched with boundless charity: such was the illustrious Porto-Rican.

Doctor Betances, who was a well of erudition and a "stylist" of the highest order, did not write much. The exercise of his profession—which assured him his personal independence and brought him resources for the good deeds to which he devoted himself, without regard to the origin or color of those he helped—left him almost no time for the composition of books. Apart from some articles on medical science and literature, which appeared in certain reviews and newspapers, I am unacquainted with anything of his, save one publication, which is more in the nature of holy propaganda: the translation into French of the eloquent and philanthropic discourse of Wendell Phillips on Toussaint Louverture. His great, living and palpitating work was the laying of the foundations of a giant's task: nothing less than the national independence of Puerto Rico and Cuba.

When I became acquainted with Doctor Betances, and through him came to know Torres Caicedo, no decision had been reached as to the procedure that was to be followed or the method that was to be adopted to effect the union of the Latin-American countries in a practical way. Nevertheless, little by little, this method took more definite shape in regard to the Antilles.

After the death of Torres Caicedo, Doctor Betances—now become the principal star by which were guided all the generous aspirations of the Latin race in America—became convinced that the confederation of all the states of South and Central America was a phenomenal and majestic conception, but one whose realization seemed impossible. Indeed, the chief sociological cause of political cohesion, which consists in the frequent, easy and continuous contact of the federated peoples, would necessarily be lacking in this case, because of the immense extent of the countries, whose interior populations are not to be reached, except with great difficulty, even for the affairs of national existence. He thought, besides, that Puerto Rico and Cuba, freed from the sovereignty of Spain,

would not be sufficient to constitute, separately, a power capable of making itself felt abroad. Thence sprang the idea of the confederation of the Antilles.

More than one Spanish patriot yielded to the charm of Doctor Betances's urbanity and became heartily attached to his separatist ideas without losing his attachment to the patria, that chivalresque Spain which has filled such grandiose pages in the splendors of a modern Europe. It was, above all, among the Spanish republicans that he found the heartiest sympathy. Through him I became acquainted, in 1894, with one of the most eminent of them—Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla—previously a radical, and the former president of the Consejo de Ministros under King Amadeo I, frankly converted to republicanism, after the abdication of our monarch, changed into the duke of Aosta. The former athlete of the political platform was but sixty years old, but, a valetudinarian, he seemed delicate and weary. He died the next year.[3]

[3]A recollection: on January 17, 1895, Doctor Betances had invited me to lunch with Messieurs Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla, Alexandre Isaac, senator from Guadaloupe, Severiano Heredia, born in Cuba, naturalized as a Frenchman in 1870, former president of the municipal council of Paris, former minister of public works, and some other friends. It was in the Durand, the chilly restaurant with which all Paris was acquainted. We had to wait more than an hour for Senator Alexandre Isaac, ordinarily so punctual that his tardiness greatly surprised Betances, Heredia and myself, who knew him intimately.

He arrived after an hour, very nervous. He excused himself by bringing the news that the resignation of Dupuy from the cabinet had been followed by that of the president, Casimir Périer, so that for the moment there was no constituted government in France. Isaac had only time enough for a hasty lunch and then he started for Versailles, where the national assembly was summoned to elect a new president of the French republic

While he was saying this and we were hastening to seat ourselves about the table, the omnibuses and the fiacres were coming out of the Rue Royale or the Place de la Madeleine, whence they went in the direction of the Place de la Concorde, in their ordinary normal traffic. The police regulated the movements of the pedestrians and fiacres. The newspaper boys began to call out the resignation of President Casimir Périer, in the midst of a wave of humanity that flowed onward as if nothing extraordinary had occurred in the national life of France.

From Ruiz Zorrilla's tender countenance escaped a sudden flash, and, with the impetuosity that must have been his in the period of his beautiful virility, he pronounced these words: "Do they say that this people is without a government? . . . And people still maintain the thesis that the Latin races are not made for *self-government!*"

What eminent personages of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the republics of Central and South America have I not met in the salon of the illustrious Antillan! Doctor Betances, after having read my book, *De l'égalité des races humanes*, manifested an esteem for me that at times surprised me very much, but which strengthened me in my ideas of progress and of the rehabilitation of the negro race. The truth is that there was between us an affinity of points of view and aspirations, which constituted a powerful and consistent bond, although I had less enthusiasm and fewer illusions than he as to the immediate realization of our patriotic ideals, which would have to pass through a long incubation the better to germinate in the countries in which they would have to sprout and grow. He never failed to introduce me with overwhelming eulogies to those that chanced to be present in his well frequented salon. Even in my absence, whenever the problem of the Antilles came up for discussion, he cited me among those he believed to be destined to play an important part in this respect. This appreciation is certainly above my merits; but Doctor Betances's word has probaby been sufficient to cause many to make of it an article of faith.

In 1893, he had occasion to confer with the incomparable José Martí in Cap Haitien.

The great patriot, on whom Cuba, recognized, later bestowed the title of apostle, presented himself in the name of Doctor Betances, who had recommended that he see me. We entertained ourselves by going over the great question of the independence of Cuba, and the possibility of an Antillan confederation. With the exception of certain practical reservations, we were in absolute accord as to principles. We were drawn to each other by an irresistible sympathy. Informed of the audacious enterprise that this man—eloquent, well informed, inspired and of an unusually broad spirit, downright and tenacious—was fostering, preparing and heralding, with the zeal of an illuminato and an apostolic devotion,

I did what I ought to do everywhere in behalf of a sacred cause.[4]

In 1895, Monsieur Paul Vibert of Paris, a daring publicist and an indefatigable worker, wrote a pamphlet of the deepest interest on the states of Central America and the Antilles. Something worthy of note is that he introduced me to his readers as the one designed to figure at the head of the confederation of the small Latin-American republics gathered into a national group, in order to oppose and to escape the menace of absorption by the great starry republic. In this respect, however, Monsieur Vibert doubtless let himself be moved merely by the intellectual and friendly relations that existed between us.

During the same period had broken out the Cuban revolution, the stirring events of which now form a part of contemporary history. Impressed by the inhuman proceedings of General Weyler, who shut up women, children and the aged in places of confinement, where they died of hunger and every kind of privation—a measure decorated with the hateful name of *reconcentración*—and, making a pretext of the catastrophe of the *Maine*, blown up in the bay of Habana, the North Americans, "in the name of humanity," came to the aid of the revolutionaries of February 24, 1895, in a spontaneous and popular movement, taken up first by President McKinley and then by the congress at Washington.

The Porto-Rican patriots were stirred to an effervescent exaltation. When the United States invaded the former Borinquén [Puerto Rico], they welcomed the American troops as liberators. They too entertained hopes of national independence and they conceived that it ought to be the logical result of the termination of the colonial domination of Spain. In Paris, Doctor Betances experienced a triumphant joy. He thought to behold at last the realization of a dream, tenderly, ardently cherished for the almost thirty years that he had lived withdrawn from his native soil, he having sworn never to set foot upon it save as free and independent.

[4]It seems to me that I awakened in the great Cuban the same feeling of admiration that he experienced in regard to myself. Indeed, in a letter that he addressed to Monsieur Sotero Figueroa, and which the latter published in an article entitled "José Martí y Antenor Firmin," are to be found the following lines: "Yesterday I spoke of you with an extraordinary Haitian with whom I became acquainted through Betances y Patria, that is, Anténor Firmin."—*El Triunfo*, Habana, May 7, 1909.

II

SPAIN—after the destruction of Admiral Cervera's fleet, after the military defeats sustained in the battles of El Caney, Guantánamo, Las Guásimas, Santiago de Cuba and on the heights of San Juan de Puerto Rico—was forced to withdraw from the Antilles; but, while Cuba, which had possessed the energy and virility to raise the standard of revolt, was recognized as independent, Puerto Rico was released from Spanish domination only to fall into the power of the United States.

When I read in Charleston harbor (South Carolina), in the preliminary protocol of the peace between Spain and the United States, the clause of the cession of Puerto Rico to the North Americans, I experienced the sensation of something like a fatal blow, aimed at the heart of Doctor Betances, with the irremediable failure of his long-cherished and patriotic hopes. I was not deceived. Indeed, I found him, soon afterward in Paris, broken and prostrate, more undermined by the overthrow of his generous aspirations than by the disease from which he apparently suffered. Moved by a delicacy with which hearts that have already suffered great disillusionments and that have loved deeply are acquainted, I did not utter a word regarding the dénouement of the bloody struggle between the successors of the Cid Campeador and the descendants of the pilgrims, over the land lighted by the sun of the old Caribs. However, this very silence regarding the stirring events of the day was one more sorrow. The martyrdom of thought is, ordinarily, mute. There is a concentrated bitterness that the soul endures with impassiveness when it is strong and brave, but the corrosive virtue of which eats it away and undermines it, just as the beak of the Jovian eagle tore out the entrails of Prometheus. He spoke no more, but he suffered frightfully, lamentably. Fortunately, his mortal agony

did not last long. The first apostle of the Antillan evangel was extinguished silently in the throes of a supreme anguish.

I had the bitter happiness of occuyping a place among the intimate friends that relieved one another, hour after hour, about the funeral couch on which reposed the gaunt form, with a brow aureoled with overflowng locks whitened by the years and by the pangs of his last disillusionment. For us it was like the "vigil of the arms," imposed during the middle ages upon future knights: an evocative and pious initiation into truth and nobility, which is that of the heart and the spirit, and of which the dear departed was the loftiest type.

He had desired that his body should be incinerated. During the cremation and in the presence of a select audience, I had the great honor to utter the last words of parting in the presence of the irreproachable patriot, the convinced philanthropist, the kindly and altruistic philosopher. . . . Since then the dream of a confederation of the Antilles has always remained alive in a corner of my brain, but the idea causes me, whenever it presents itself, a sorrowful shiver. It inevitably reminds me of the two great dead that were its distinguished champions—José Martí, who fell at Dos Ríos beneath the Spanish bullets, and Betances, wounded to death by a lack of generosity on the part of the United States. From 1898 to 1905, a hard experience and the sociological and political meditations that were its consequences, had greatly diminished my enthusiasm—still theoretical—if they did not render me absolutely pessimistic. I was in this frame of mind when I received the letter of Monsieur Francisco Carvajal —whom I did not have the honor to know —supported by the recommendation of Monsieur Enrique Jiménez, a young, attractive and intelligent Dominican.

While giving the last touches to my book, *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis et la république d'Haïti*, I failed to reply immediately to this letter, which had, nevertheless, deeply interested me. Although the *Lettres de Saint-Thomas* contained only those that I wrote, a particularity causes me to insert here the letter of Monsieur F. Carvajal. When, after a long delay, I sent my answer to the direction given (Cuba, 76, Habana), my letter was returned, stamped by the postal-office thus: "Unknown." During my stay in Cuba, in spite of my search for information, I obtained no news regarding Monsieur F. Carvajal, although, it should be said, his letter would have remained to me a mystery, a myth, without the letter of Monsieur Enrique Jiménez, which accompanied it and the contents of which is as follows:

HABANA, *January 27, 1905.*

SEÑOR ANTÉNOR FIRMIN,
SAINT-THOMAS.

ESTEEMED AND RESPECTED SIR:

Moved by a lofty Antillan sentiment, I have requested of my friend and companion, señor Enrique Jiménez, the letter I have the pleasure of inclosing with this.

Be not surprised that I come, by means of these lines, without antecedent, to occupy your attention and claim your benevolence for the trouble they may occasion you.

For some time a group of Antillans resident in Cuba, and others that are to be found in different countries, have been working to the extent of their powers, at present modest, for the realization of the ideal of Hostos and Martí—noble enlighteners of our people—for the written gospel in which is to be found the supreme salvation of our Antillan patria, for the formulas of a morality both sincere and lofty, born of deep consideration of the immutable precepts of sociology in relation to geography, the nature of races, countries and the history of the different peoples that inhabit the archipelago discovered by Columbus.

You, who are one of our highest personages and on whom the destiny of these peoples, in large measure depends, ought not to remain indifferent to the action that looks to breaking the old and inadequate mold in which languish indefinitely the best spurts of Antillan effort; and perhaps you will be one of the teachers whose elevated counsel is to guide our steps—along unknown paths—to the limit of our just aspirations, which are addressed to the formation of a state out of the Antilles, by proclaiming to this end the independence of all the present colonies of the Caribbean sea.

We have estimated the greatness of the work and we have seriously considered the distance that separates us from its realization; but we are resolved, at all events, to begin the task

by putting our weak endeavors under the patronage of the same spirit that inflamed the liberative cohorts of the American Union, of Haiti, Santo Domingo, Cuba and all America, throughout the immense extent of territory that is to-day free from the humiliating colonial yoke.

We depend on the noble conscience of the free continent and the point of honor of the enslaved Antilles, the faces of which we shall illuminate with exhortations of truth and justice, showing them their immense misfortune. We proceed with extreme slowness. The idea is hardly beginning to stir; we go forward little by little, working in silence until in better days we shall present to the world our program and address ourselves directly to the slumbering consciousness of the countries whose liberty now constitutes our worship.

We intend to publish a book with the biographies of all the illustrious Antillans that have contributed in different degrees to the moral and intellectual elevation of our peoples, and we consider that worthy examples are the best stimuli that can be presented to such as sleep the deadly sleep of political servitude. Consequently, I beg to solicit of your constant patriotism data with reference to your native country, the first of the Antilles and the second of America to proclaim the rights of man on this continent, in the incomparable glories of which the history of Haiti shines like a refulgent star.

The signs of the times seem to us to indicate the approach of the hour in which the family of the Lucayas and the Caribs ought to group itself anew in order to unite in a close and indissoluble bond of reciprocal love by forming a confederation that shall have in view the security and well-being of these lands, the geographical distribution of which shows us that they have obtained no result, and that they will obtain much, under the impulse of the union.

We dream of Antillan unity and of the independence of Jamaica, the Bahamas and the Lesser Antilles.

It is impossible to believe, señor Firmin, that a fatal destiny has for ever condemned these weak countries of glorious America to the saddest and most degrading of political slaveries. On the contrary, we must believe that, being perhaps the last to seat themselves about the hearth of liberty, which, through their noble sacrifice and generous blood, was created by the liberators of the New World, among whom stood in the first rank the immortal Toussaint Louverture, these people are better prepared for the enjoyment of this lofty privilege. Fruits that mature slowly always have the best flavor.

There is no doubt as to whether your coöperation in this enlightened endeavor will be of great importance and even invaluable; we do not doubt, we can not doubt, that the serene patriot that has most nobly sacrificed his own interests, as well as those of his victorious party, rather than see the country in danger, will refuse his support to an idea in which resides the same spirit that inspired you in the unfortunate affair of La Crête à Pierrot facing the *Panther*, in the bay of Gonaives. The Haitian policy went on the rocks there, but the Antillan patriot reached the highest summit of victory. We shall soon present the idea of the Antillan confederation in this capital, and we beseech of you, who are one of our most eminent allies, to give us courage to undertake our laborious campaign, inasmuch as all the qualities that are summed up in your lofty personality lead us to the conclusion that the cause we uphold is also yours.

Receive, señor Firmin, the expression of our most profound respect, with our sincere esteem.

F. CARVAJAL.

Direction: Cuba, 76,
Habana.

The ardor of the proselyte that gleams from the lines of Monsieur F. Carvajal proves that the idea of the Antillan confederation still burns in more than one Latin-American brain. It exercises a real ascendancy over those that in a clear conception experience a discerning desire to constitute in our Caribbean region an important state that shall have as a basis the closer and closer union of the material and moral interests of these superb, verdant and fruitful islands, washed for ever by the warm, blue, limpid, swaying waters of the sea of the Antilles.

It was very agreeable to me to discover in Habana an evidence of sympathy and admiration that seemed to belie the legend of a disdainful repulsion on the part of the white Cuban toward all persons that had in their veins even a small infusion of African blood. I am absolutely black, and, nevertheless, I received in the capital of Cuba an enthusiastic welcome unequaled by any offered to any other diplomat that has gone to that country, What, however, explains the great enthusiasm aroused by my presence, as the minister of Haiti, was—in addition to a literary and scientific reputation, disputable, perhaps—the sympathetic and moral ties that had

existed between Doctor Betances, José Martí and myself, and that I am acquainted with the former workers for Cuban independence, the "irredentists" of the idea of an Antillan confederation.

One of the paladins of *El Yara* wrote:

> We that have good memories and that recall the revolutionary past have felt as if the spirit of Antillan solidarity had revived when we saw Firmin, the eminent statesman admired by Martí, received to-day by the president of the republic.
>
> In evoking this recollection and the recent proposal made by the popular chamber of Puerto Rico, we reaffirm this declaration of the old program:
>
> "The Cuban revolutionary party is constituted to achieve the independence of Cuba and to aid in fostering that of Puerto Rico."

Indeed, on February 27, 1909, at San Juan, Puerto Rico, nine members of the chamber of delegates met to present the resolution on the confederation of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Santo Domingo and Haiti, with the name of the "República Antillana." The plan provided for a president and a supreme court of justice for the four states, and the election for each of them of a governor and administrative and judicial functionaries. It was also "enunciated" in that "resolution" that the United States should have naval stations in the República Antillana and the right to interfere in case of revolution, in exchange for her protection and for freedom of commerce with American ports. This proposal was discussed in a secret session, but, without its being formally rejected, no decided action was taken.

It was in the nature of a "general plan," presented in the full assembly of the representatives of Puerto Rico. It still remains in the air, and no one can predict its political fate. The government of the Porto-Ricans is already becoming more and more difficult for the Americans. It would be in no way extraordinary that, sooner or later, the United States should change her colonial rule over Puerto Rico into a sort of intangible protectorate, from a political point of view, but very real and positive from the economic and financial standpoint. Uncle Sam knows how to content himself with these practical compromises, according to emergencies. The national independence of the fourth of the Greater Antilles is within the category of things possible or very probable; but, even in this case, it may be asked what would be the probability of realizing the great dream of Hostos, Betances, Luperón, Martí and so many other illustrious Antillans, dead or still living. When will come the day for this federation of the Antilles: the ideal and sacred aim of such continuous and generous efforts? How can it be attained and what chance of immediate and peaceful success would so noble and delicate an enterprise have? For my reply to these questions, I give to the reader my letter addressed to Monsieur F. Carvajal. I have nothing to add to it, save the profound and sincere joy that has been occasioned me by the happy termination of the second American intervention, which has left the republic of Cuba independent and mistress of her own national destiny.

SAINT THOMAS, *March 15, 1907.*

MONSIEUR F. CARVAJAL,
HABANA.
DEAR SIR:

You have had good ground to complain of not having received my reply to your interesting letter of January 27, 1905. That letter, thrust among my other papers and documents, unfortunately escaped me, and for a long time I have been looking for it, without being able to find it. I have always carried this as a burden upon my conscience, while my forgetting of your address prevented me from even offering you an excuse. By the most happy chance I laid my hands on the letter during these days. The cause of my difficulty in discovering it was probably due to the fact that it was written on a Remington machine, the characters of which are always used for official and commercial documents and special memorials, I probably handled it more than once, without suspecting that it was the manuscript sought with such solicitude.

So much time has passed since the day on which it was written that it would seem proper not to return to it, continuing rather a silence that you must already have judged and condemned with such good right; but the substance of it is so important that I feel the necessity of replying, above all, when I recall the proverb: "Better late than never."

Your idea of provoking an intellectual and

moral movement in favor of the future confederation of the Antilles is very generous. I remember that in 1893, at Cap Haitien, I heard your distinguished and lamented compatriot José Martí expound it with that ardor of conviction and that enthusiastic eloquence with which he was so admirably gifted; but the aspirations involved in this idea are as difficult to realize as they are noble and elevated.

Besides, in order that they may triumph and be translated into a tangible fact, there is need of a great, continuous and holy propaganda by those that are animated by the sacred fire of a broad, intelligent and discerning patriotism, based, above all, on this truth, that the three small nations that at present occupy the two great Antilles—as long as they shall lead an isolated existence—will never constitute, each of them, a power capable of making itself respected. While, on the contrary, by uniting their national destinies and by attracting to themselves the other Antillan islands that exist to-day under a colonial régime, they would form at length a consistent state, capable of selfmaintenance and of creating for itself a serious claim to the esteem and respect of other nations.

It is to this end that you are working. Every man of heart can but applaud your magnificent idea. You were right in thinking that I would not deny you my moral support. Nevertheless, as I wrote last year to a publicist of Guadaloupe,[5] who had communicated to me ideas absolutely identical with yours, I believe such an enterprise could not achieve a complete success, save with great difficulty, in view of the slight sociological consistency that is to be found in the political groups, even in the bosom of the Antilles, for a long time constituted as independent states, such as Haiti and the Dominican republic, to say nothing of Cuba, which is still in a period of national experiment. Afterward, political occurrences that have been brought about in your country by the antagonism between the group of the conservatives, at the head of which is President Palma, and that of the liberals, with General José Miguel Gómez at its head, have brought on a fresh intervention on the part of the North Americans. It is with an interest that approaches anguish that the friends of Cuban liberty and independence await the outcome of this painful situation.

What ought we to think of the French, English, Dutch or American Antilles? Not only is it not certain that they all desire to pass from their colonial existence to a formal autonomy or national independence, but neither is it known to what point they would be capable of preserving a constitutional organization, without any administrative tutelage on the part of the foreign mother-country. Your ideal is infinitely elevated and attractive, I must repeat; but its practical realization demands a long gestation of the idea that inspires it, facilitated by a happy evolution of the human elements that will be called upon to inform themselves regarding it, for the greater honor and the greater glory of this archipelago of the Antilles, which we may consider, from to-day, as our "greater patria," aiding in the genesis of a sentiment of real and powerful sympathy bebetween the Antillans, beyond and above all distinctions of race, origin and nationality.

It is with this spirit that I join in your beautiful aspirations, with all my heart and with all my soul.

As to the request that you have made of me, for historical data as to Haiti, I improve this occasion to offer you a copy of my book, *Monsieur Roosevelt, président des États-Unis et la république d'Haïti*, published in 1905, begging you to accept it in testimony of my sincere esteem.

Receive, dear sir, my sympathetic and devoted salutations.

A. Firmin.

[5] It was by a mistake or a failure of memory that I wrote that the ideas set forth by a publicist of Guadaloupe, Monsieur H. Adolphe Lara, to whom I have made allusion, were "absolutely identical" with those of Monsieur F. Carvajal. The charming writer of Guadaloupe did not imagine a confederation of the Antilles, but a federation of the negro Antilles, a program essentially sociological, very delicate and difficult to carry out, but of a less ample conception. Here is how Monsieur Lara expressed himself in his letter of February 13, 1906, which he addressed to me:

"The black race ought to be honored to possess a man like yourself; and, if my intellectual and economic means permitted me to do so, I should have requested your aid in realizing a project that I have cherished for some time: that of creating under the ægis of men like you, a federation of Antillan negroes. We are French, English, Spanish, by right of conquest, but being of a common origin and harboring the same prejudices, we ought to be solidary for the defense of our own interests. I have friends in the English Antilles, publicists, who, although still maintaining a sincere loyalty to their mother-country, think their congeners of Martinique, Guadaloupe, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Haiti are, before everything, brothers with whom they ought to have an understanding; and such a movement in our epoch of pacifism and internationalism would in no way disquiet the mother-countries, and it would oblige them to be juster, to treat us with less contempt"

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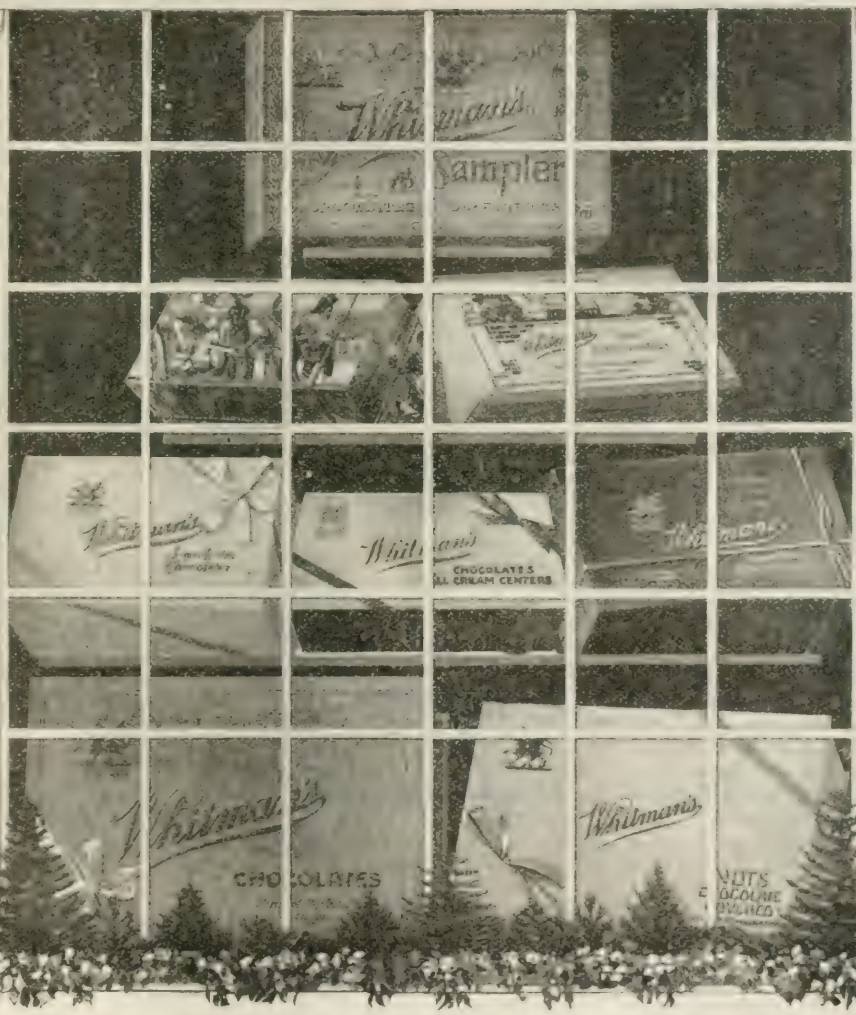

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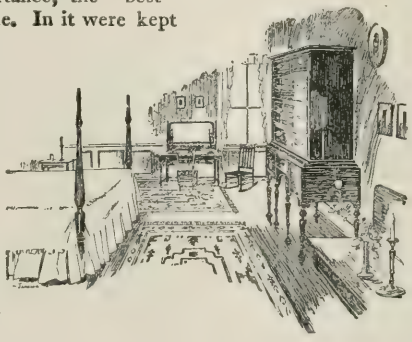

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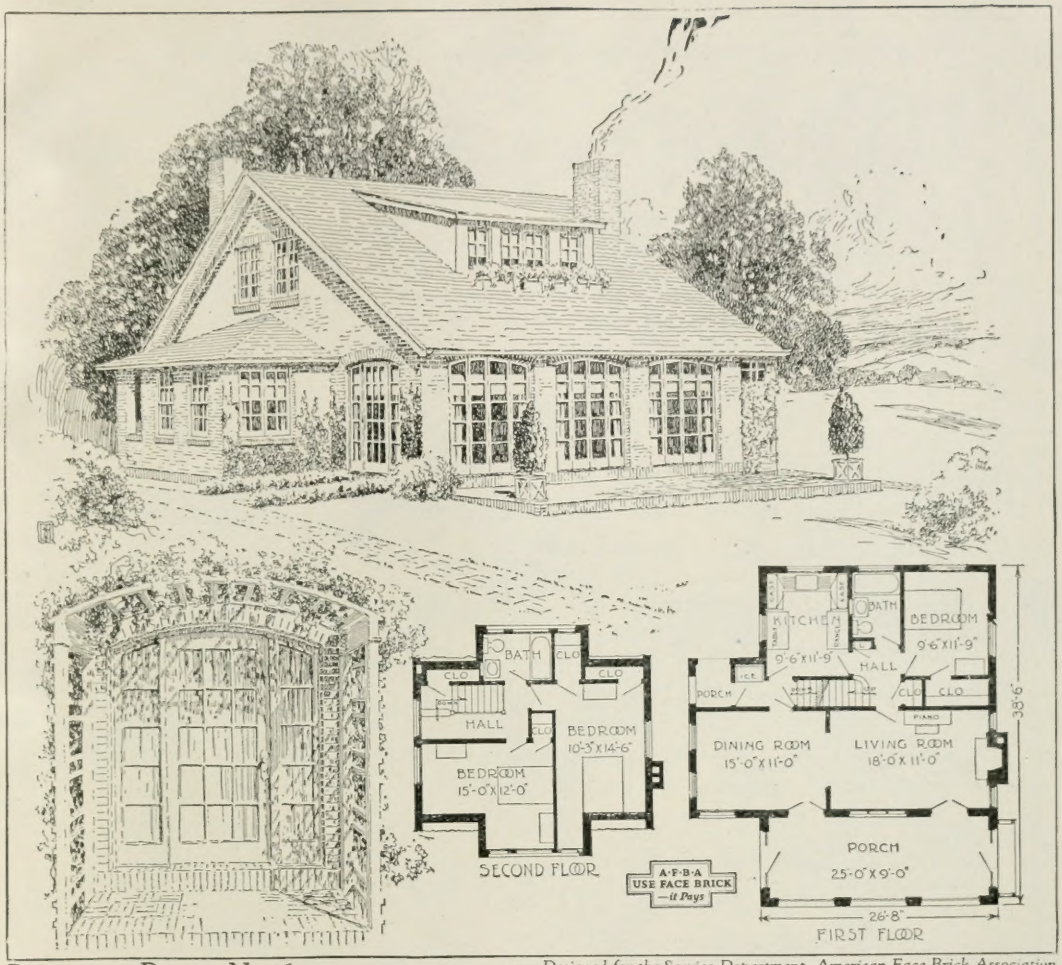

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